

NIETZSCHE AND ZEN

An Essay in Philosophical Theology

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A dunce once searched for a fire with a lighted lantern.

Joshu Washes the Bowl, The Gateless Gate No. 7

Zen Flesh, Zen Bones

Compiled by Paul Reps. Translated by Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki

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PREFACE

This book is a philosophical examination of the work of the nineteenth century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and the Chinese and Japanese philosophy of life, Zen. Although both philosophies appear radically anti-metaphysical, I argue that they tacitly presuppose the metaphysics and theology they disparage or putatively eschew.

Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists make some strikingly similar claims about life, death, suffering, illusion and reality, life after death, and the possible transformation of what it is to be human. A central conclusion that I argue for is that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is an enlightened being. The life of that 'superman' who is more quintessentially human than the average human being is similar in philosophically important respects to that of the the Zen monk who has undergone the transformation in being called *Satori* or 'Enlightenment'. These affinities show that Nietzsche's philosophy is, or essentially contains, Zen. However, my aim is not comparative History of Ideas but the *philosophical appraisal* of Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen.

I first sat, or 'learned' the meditative practice of letting-be that is *zazen*, over thirty years ago. My interest in Nietzsche was caused by lectures delivered by Michael Tanner and Bernard Williams in the University of Cambridge. I am grateful to Keith Ansell-Pearson, Daniel Came, Richard Fitch, Benedikt Goecke, Michael Inwood, Grahame Locke and Alexander Norman for useful discussion. I thank Professor Hitoshi Nagai and his research student Shogo Shimizu, both of Chui University, Japan, for visiting me in Oxford and for such a worthwhile exchange of ideas.

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Abbreviations

Nietzsche

BGE: *Beyond Good and Evil*. trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1966

The Birth of Tragedy. trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*. New York: Random House, 1967

CW: Friedrich Nietzsche *The Case of Wagner*. trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*. New York: Random House, 1967

D: Friedrich Nietzsche *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*. trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982

GM: Friedrich Nietzsche *The Genealogy of Morals* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

HATH: Friedrich Nietzsche *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986

GS: Friedrich Nietzsche *The Gay Science, with a Prelude of Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. tr. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1974

W: *The Will to Power*. trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1967

Z: Friedrich Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Portable Nietzsche*. New York: Viking Press, 1968

Zen

WD Kapleau, Philip, and Paterson Simons, eds. *The Wheel of Death: A Collection of Writings from Zen Buddhist and Other Sources on Death, Rebirth, Dying*. (Harper and Row, New York, 1971)

WZ Alan Watts *The Way of Zen* (Vintage Books, New York, 1957)

ZB D. T. Suzuki *Essays in Zen* 3 vols. (Rider and Co., 1949-53)

ZNM D. T. Suzuki *The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind* ed. Christmas Humphreys. (Rider and Co., London, 1969)

INTRODUCTION

Here I offer a summary of Nietzsche's philosophical development and say something about what Zen is. There is something inherently paradoxical about trying to do either. Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen are elusive, aphoristic and practical in ways that render any *précis* of them incomplete and misleading. Paradoxically, their essence is to have no essence. The only way to understand Nietzsche is to read him and think. The only way to understand Zen is to do it or, more accurately, be it.

Who is Nietzsche?

Nietzsche describes his own life phases as like *masks*. I suggest they are like the phases in the development of a Zen monk. Nietzsche is concerned with the *efficacy* of ideas, rather than establishing their realistic truth. Nietzsche is concerned to change people's lives rather than to refute or prove their beliefs and theories. He seeks to discredit and explain metaphysical and theological philosophy, he does not seek to refute it by deductive argument. A brilliant prose stylist, Nietzsche authored sharp philosophical interventions. He lived from 1844-1900 but went mad in January 1889 at the age of 44. It is possible to discern five main philosophical influences which motivate his thought.

Firstly, Nietzsche was immersed in the literature and culture of ancient Greece as a student at the Universities of Bonn and then Leipzig from 1864, and then as professor of classical philology at the University of Basel at the age of twenty-four.

Secondly, Nietzsche discerns the crisis of Western civilisation in the 'Death of God', that is, in atheism, and in 'the advent of nihilism' which implies that there is no theological foundation for ethics. His own philosophy may be understood as an attempt to overcome this crisis; to 'go beyond' nihilism and 'affirm life'. Nietzsche's profound anti-Christianity is arguably also a reaction against the faith of his family. His father and maternal grandfather were both Lutheran ministers. His paternal grandfather was a Christian author.

Thirdly, Nietzsche studied the major work of the German neo-Kantian idealist Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860); *The World as Will and Representation*, while a student at Leipzig. Nietzsche understood Schopenhauer as a pessimistic atheist whose thought encapsulates the problem of the Death of God. In Schopenhauer's thought, the individual strives and suffers. Nietzsche aimed for a positive, or optimistic, solution to this suffering and the possibility of a point to this striving.

Fourthly, through the personal and artistic influence of the German operatic composer and music theorist Richard Wagner (1813-1883) Nietzsche thought suffering could be transfigured through aesthetic creation.

Finally, Nietzsche was steeped in contemporary scientific materialist philosophy, notably the then influential work of F.A. Lange: *The History of Materialism* (1865).

This seemed to open the possibility of sweeping away the old superstitions of theology and metaphysics forever.

It is possible to discern four phases of Nietzsche's life, three sane and one mad: an anti Socratic phase, a positivistic pro-Socratic phase, a relativist and pragmatist Phase, and the final mad phase.

The anti-Socratic Phase lasts from 1869 to 1876. While holding the Chair of Philology at the University of Basel (1864-1879) Nietzsche visited Richard Wagner at Lake Lucerne. In *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (1872) Nietzsche searched for a new non-Christian ethics in the Ancient Greeks and subsequently in Wagner. Nietzsche contrasts Greek culture before and after Socrates with German culture before and after Wagner. He argues that life is essentially tragic and inexplicable but transmuted by art. The affirmation of life through creative genius transmutes life into an aesthetic phenomenon. Creative genius is the goal and justification of culture. The Dionysian and the Apollonian were fused in the tragedies of Aeschylus before the advent of Socrates effected their bifurcation. If their fusion could not be reinstated, it is a model to be emulated. During this phase, Nietzsche was heavily influenced by Schopenhauer. In *Untimely Meditations* (1873-6), Nietzsche is critical of the German theologian David Strauss (1808-1874), author of the controversial *Leben Jesu (Life of Jesus)* (1835) and advocates Schopenhauer's philosophy, and Wagner's opera and operatic theory. In 1870 Nietzsche served as a volunteer medical orderly in the Franco-Prussian War.

The positivistic pro-Socratic phase lasts from 1876 to 1883. Nietzsche resigned from the chair at Basel in 1879 through ill-health and spent 1879-1889 in Switzerland, Italy, Germany, devoting his time to writing. The book *Human, All-too-Human* (1898-9) is profoundly anti-metaphysical and materialist and includes naturalistic explanations of morality. For example: that a distinction is drawn between good and evil is a necessary condition for a society. Conscience is the internalised voice of secular, not divine, authority: the father, the mother, the teacher. *Daybreak* (1881) is a tirade against 'morality'. There is no God, no responsibility and no morality. Nietzsche undermines our confidence that in acting we have knowledge of the essential nature of our actions. This is a 'terrible truth'. (116) Our actions are never what they appear to be. Nor is there any security in the rest of knowledge: Neither the external world nor the internal world is as it appears. There is no escape from the perspectives of own subjectivity. Nietzsche has an existentialist appreciation of the lived reality of one's own existence. He says that around every being there is a circle, which has a mid point unique to that being, but this entails a quasi-solipsism which makes knowledge impossible. Each of us is constrained by their senses as if in a prison. When Nietzsche says 'It is all of it an error' (D 117) he does not mean we can be even confident of this. His scepticism implies that any belief we hold could in principle be mistaken. Our so called 'knowledge' exists only in relation to the kind of senses we have:

'The habits of our senses have woven us into lies and deception of sensation: these again are the basis of all our judgments and 'knowledge' - there is absolutely no escape, no backway or bypath into the real world!' (D 117)

Our web of belief is something we are caught in: 'our net'. (D 116) *Daybreak* includes a 'Critique of European values'. 'Our' values are historically situated and produced not God-given and discovered. The claim that 'God is dead' and the praising of 'free spirits', who are self-defining and, in a sense, de-conditioned, are in the diatribe against Christianity in *The Gay Science* (1882).

The relativist and pragmatist phase lasts from 1883 to 1889. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-5) the Persian sage's words include the doctrine of Eternal Return, the prophecy of the *Übermensch* and the transvaluation of values: What is the value of values? What are values for? In *Beyond Good and Evil: a Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (1886), the distinction is drawn between master morality and slave morality. *A Genealogy of Morals* (1887) is a genetic explanation of morals: Power and politics are prior to morality. Master and Slave Morality are the 'Twofold pre-history of good and evil' (GM 1.45) 'firstly in the soul of the ruling tribes' (GM 1.45). 'Then in the soul of the subjected, the powerless' (GM 1.45) 'Good and bad is for a long time the same thing as noble and base, master and slave' (GM 1.45). Nietzsche sees the origin of slave morality in *Resentment. The Case of Wagner* (1888) and the *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* essay are attacks on Wagner, with whom Nietzsche ultimately breaks acrimoniously. *The Antichrist* (1895) is a diatribe against Christianity. Nietzsche is the self-professed enemy of Christ. In an atheistic inversion of Christianity, reminiscent of Feuerbach and Marx, Nietzsche says Christ is God made into man but God is man made into God. The notebooks of the last few years of his sane life were published posthumously as *The Will to Power* (1900).

The mad phase lasts from 1889 until Nietzsche's death in 1900. He spent the final eleven years of his life in Turin, Basel, Jena, Naumburg (with his sister) and in Weimar. He died on August 25th 1900. *Twilight of the Gods* (1889) is a summary of own philosophy, authored as he went mad. The autobiographical *Ecce Homo*, published posthumously in 1908, includes the essays 'Why I am So Wise', 'Why I am So Clever', and 'Why I write Such Excellent Books'.

What is Zen?

The term 'Zen' means 'meditation' in Japanese. It derives from the Chinese *ch'an*, which is etymologically related to the Sanskrit *dhyana*: 'meditation'. Zen is also the name of a practical movement in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. Through a regime of concentration and meditation the student is de-conditioned from ordinary thinking, and detached from desire. This process discloses the Enlightened state, beyond being and nothingness, which is not subject to thoughts and sensations. Although the state is ineffable (and so cannot even in any ordinary sense be rightly called 'a state') it

might be induced by shocks to rational thought such as exposure to irresolvable puzzles called *koans* (in the *Rinzai* school of Zen) or by sitting motionless for long periods (in *Soto* Zen). Every person is *already* enlightened so it would be a misunderstanding of Enlightenment to construe it as a future state to be attained. Enlightenment is realized by detachment from desire and habitual means to end thinking, and their eventual cessation. This cannot be done by will power, only as a consequence of meditation or other Zen Buddhist practices. Trying to be Enlightened, as well as construing Enlightenment as future, are obstacles to Enlightenment, that is, being at one with one's true Enlightened state. Once the present has been polished clean like a mirror by meditation, Enlightenment is disclosed as already all here now. Although Zen is intensely practical, experiential and non-linguistic, and the medium of philosophy is language, in its insistence on the ineffable Zen has an affinity with the later Aquinas and the early Wittgenstein who each thought philosophy reaches a certain limit in what cannot be said.

Zen was founded in China by Bodhidharma, who brought the doctrines of the *Lanka-Vatara Sutra* from India the late 5th century. The genesis of Zen arguably lies in the fusion of Bodhidharma's Buddhism with Chinese Tao. Bodhidharma was succeeded as master by Hui-k'o (487—593). The Zen emphasis on practice rather than doctrine is well shown by Hui-neng (638—713), the sixth patriarch of Chinese Zen, who was both enlightened and illiterate. Ma-tsu, Nan-chuan, Huang-po, Lin-chi, and Chao-chou were masters during the golden age of Zen in the 8th and 9th centuries. Scripture and doctrine were regarded as unimportant, or even as hinderances, to the realization of one's Enlightenment. Instead, there was an emphasis on self-discipline, oral instruction and testing dialogue. Sometimes a monk might be suddenly hit with a cane, for example if their alert meditation shaded off into doziness.

There was severe persecution of Buddhism in China in 845. However, Zen not only survived due to its isolation in mountain monasteries, but was left as the most practiced form of Buddhism in China. As a result of the persecution, Zen divided into two principal schools: Lin-chi and Ts'ao-tung. These were brought to Japan in the 14th century where they were known as Rinzai Zen and Soto Zen respectively.

In Soto Zen there is an emphasis on just sitting. As early as Bodhidharma there had been the practice of looking at the wall. (The present author remembers long periods sitting looking at a whitewashed wall in the 1970's. I, and others, asked 'Why are we looking at the wall?' Our monk would only ever reply 'Look at the wall!') Just sitting is the kind of meditation known as *zazen*. That there is no point, or no overtly stated point, to *zazen* allows a measure of deconditioning, a falling away of the repetitive ordinary mind. It would not be completely wrong to say *zazen* therefore has a point after all: deconditioning, detachment, Enlightenment, but this could be misleading. If *zazen* is done with this (or anything) *as a goal in mind*, paradoxically, 'the goal' cannot be 'reached'. Indeed, as we have seen, Enlightenment is not a goal in the sense of a future state. The gate is a gateless gate.

The famous Soto Zen master Dōgen (1200—1253) is notably associated with just sitting.

In Rinzai Zen, the student is presented with apparently insoluble problems in the form of short questions called *koans*. Famously:

What is the sound of one hand clapping?

The solution to the problem is that there is no solution, or at least, the solution does not consist in thinking this thought rather than that thought. The solution to the problem of life is to cease regarding life as a problem. The student puzzles over what the sound of one hand clapping might be. In the end, the thinking of this thought rather than that thought ceases and, in the space where thoughts happen, there is Enlightenment. I am inclined to say there is *being* rather than *thinking*, but Enlightenment transcends the difference between being and nothingness. (In the particular case of ‘What is the sound of one hand clapping?’ it is in fact possible to generate sound by striking the base of one’s palm with the tops of one’s fingers. It is debatable whether, without amplification, this is loud enough to count as clapping.)

No Water, No Moon

The Zen nun Chiyono was carrying water in a rickety bucket. The bottom fell out and the water was lost. At that moment Chiyono was Enlightened. No water in the pail, no moon in the water. No mirror, no reflection. No mind, no world.

If there is a correct answer to a *koan* it is *Mu* (Chinese *Wu*). ‘Mu’ means: *Neither yes nor no* or *The question rests on a false assumption*. It could also be translated as: *Unask the question*. For example, the answer to *Does a dog have the Buddha nature?* might well be *Mu*. In ordinary Japanese, the prefix ‘Mu’ has the sense of ‘without’ or ‘less’ but in Rinzai practice its sense is not that of simple negation or privation. Its meaning is ‘beyond’ negation and affirmation.

In Zen, especially in Rinzai, there is sudden action:

An academic visited the Master Nan-in, to find out about Zen. Nan-in filled the visitor’s tea cup until the tea flowed onto the floor.

Kakua was summoned by the emperor to talk about Zen. Kakua played one short note on his flute, bowed, and left.

As he was dying, the old Zen Master Mu-nan entrusted his own writings to his successor Shoju. Straight away, Shoju threw them on the fire. ‘What are you doing!’ exclaimed Mu-nan. ‘What are you saying!’ exclaimed Shoju.

Zen became the ethos of the Samurai, the medieval Japanese feudal military class. Zen monks generated a rich yet austere artistic culture which notably includes poetry,

calligraphy, painting, gardening, the tea ceremony and flower arrangement. Much of what one thinks of as paradigmatically Japanese in culture is Zen.

The influence of Zen in Japan waned in the 16th and 17th centuries but nevertheless spread to Korea and Vietnam. There was a renaissance in Japanese Zen under the great Master Hakuin (1686—1769).

BEYOND DEATH AND SUFFERING

Both Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists hold that the most fearful force confronting any person is their own death, and both offer teachings according to which the fear of death may be overcome. Neither Nietzsche's *Übermensch* nor the Zen Buddhist in *Satori* fears death. Each has a power and an understanding which, although allegedly non-metaphysical, allow death to be faced and undergone with equanimity.

Facing Death

The fear of death is not overcome by belief in a metaphysically transcendent afterlife. For example, Nietzsche repudiates, and the Zen Buddhists do not endorse, any reality similar to the Judeo-Christian heaven or hell. Rather they advocate a profound self-transformation in what it is to be human. A human being has to become the kind of being for whom death is not disturbing. This transformation is not essentially brought about by the acquisition of *new beliefs* but by *living in a different way*. By the practice of the kind of meditation called *za-zen*, and by ceasing to be subject to 'herd morality' or 'slave morality' a person becomes the kind of being who is not afraid to die. Nevertheless, fear of death is defused by the acquisition of two central insights. One concerns rebirth, the other concerns the self.

It is an entailment of Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return and the Zen doctrine of rebirth that any human being has been born and has died innumerable times before this life. We face innumerable births and deaths in lives to come. Both doctrines admit of both a metaphysical and a non-metaphysical interpretation, or both a literal and metaphorical reading.

Read metaphorically, Nietzsche is saying that one should *have the strength to live one's life as if* one could bear for it to be repeated in every detail an infinite number of times in the future. One would then live with a life-affirming energy and an authenticity of commitment which would make living thoroughly worthwhile. The French atheistic existentialist novelist and playwright, Albert Camus, says at the start of his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942):

'There is only one really serious philosophical question, and that is suicide. Deciding whether or not life is worth living is to answer the fundamental question in philosophy. All other questions follow from that.'

Nietzsche would have urged us to answer in the affirmative.

Read literally, Nietzsche is saying that one's life *as a matter of metaphysical fact* has been repeated in every detail an infinite number of times in the past and will be in the future. Nietzsche, the anti-metaphysical philosopher, is showing us that he can do metaphysical philosophy of the most disturbing and outrageous kind.

Read metaphorically, the Zen Buddhists are saying that *within this life* there is a kind of birth and death from moment to moment; a coming to be and passing away of the galaxy of thoughts and emotions that constitute one's 'self' or 'mind'. Inwardly, or mentally, each of us is ceasing to be and beginning to be at any moment of our lives, no matter how brief. I am always dying, always being reborn. (We shall see later, however, that what we think of as the end of a life is not radically different from these transitions. Up to a point, this blurs the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical readings.)

Read literally, the Zen Buddhists are saying that at the moment of one's biological death (or soon after), one is reborn as a new life. There is life after death in the sense of *another* life after death. Each human person lives many karmically induced lives. The life that one thinks of as 'my life' is only the current one. Clearly, the metaphorical and the literal construals of each doctrine are mutually consistent. I can live my life *as though* it would be infinitely repeated and it could be *true* that it will be infinitely repeated. I might be psychologically reborn and die at every moment of a life and be reborn at the end of that life.

There is however a clear point of inconsistency between the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation and Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return. Buddhism allows the possibility of escape. Indeed, it is essential to Enlightenment that the enlightened person is not reborn. The cycle of death and rebirth can be broken by meditative training and the state of *Satori*, or *Nirvana*, partly consists in the ending of the living of lives.

The other thesis that putatively defuses fear of death concerns the self. Both Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists maintain that there is no enduring self, soul, or metaphysical ego that ends at death. Death is not to be feared because, in a sense, *there is no one to die*. Of course, the human being exists, *this* human being exists. But there is not, fundamentally, anyone who this human being is. A person is a process, or set of psycho-physical events, rather than an entity. When a person dies, it is not the case that a substance has ceased to exist, or that anyone or anything has become separated from a body, or from human or worldly existence. Rather, a process has ended. The relevant metaphor is not: *It has left* but *It has stopped*.

Both Nietzsche and Zen have accounts of how we mistakenly come to think of ourselves as entities: either physical entities; our bodies, or spiritual entities; our souls. Both entail that these reifications of ourselves are illusory. It follows that neither a scientific materialist account of the person nor a Judeo-Christian theological account of the person is fundamental. Rather, in so far as I exist at all, I am my psycho-physical lives. In so far as I die, one psycho-physical life comes to an end. I am a series of life processes. At birth one such process begins. At death this process

ends but I continue, or resume, as another such process. So when Roshi Hakun Yasutani (b. 1885), the Master who attempted a synthesis of Rinzai and Soto in *Sanbo Kyodan* (Fellowship of Three Treasures), says:

'Having once perceived the world of Buddha-nature, we are indifferent to death' (WD 8)

this cannot be fully understood in terms of changes in *belief*. It is not as though the Zen doctrines of no-mind and rebirth are consolations for something that remains fearful. The Buddha-nature is more fundamental than death. The cycle of birth and death depends upon the Buddha-nature but the Buddha-nature does not depend upon the cycle of birth and death. Yasutani's 'perceived' does not mean 'perceived' in any straightforward empirical sense. Yasutani is referring to the transformation in being brought about by *za-zen* and other Zen techniques for awakening. The world is ordinarily 'perceived' through thought and the five senses. (The mind is a sense in Buddhism.) But the sensation of oneself as *one being amongst others* in that world is no longer adhered to. Rather, that sensation *is itself* just one sensation amongst others, one more recurrent episode in this life process. The sensation of self repeatedly dies and is reborn. Once this is grasped, the cessation of this sensation is not feared. After all, there are many moments without such a sensation. This is why there was, all along, in a sense, no-one to die. The 'indifference' to death that Yasutani speaks of is the absence of fear of death. It is not the presence of an intellectual attitude but the absence of an emotion. Or, *if* the emotion arises, that too is passively acknowledged as only another transient event. It is not felt. Or, if it *is* felt (because it is essentially a feeling) there is no *feeling of* it over and above its being a feeling and certainly no *feeler of* the feeling. Like other emotions, it arises and subsides, is born and dies. It is not to be taken seriously.

Perceiving the Buddha-nature requires a certain *de-conditioning* or *de-socialisation*. We have been taught and brought up to fear death. Zen does not so much reverse this conditioning but exposeS it for what it is: a constellation of belief and emotion based on authority. Nietzsche also thinks we are conditioned into regarding death as necessarily an evil, necessarily the greatest evil. If we can begin to be aware of how we are socialised into fearing death we can begin to lose that fear. He provides this example:

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NOT ALL THAT IMPORTANT

When one witnesses a death there regularly arises a thought which, out of a false sense of decency, one immediately supresses: that the act of dying is not as significant as it is generally regarded as being, and that the dying man has probably lost more important things in life than that which he is about to lose. Here the end is certainly not the goal. (para 349 p. 165)

We repress the thought that death is not terrible. It is part of the herd morality that death is necessarily an evil and life necessarily a good (as though there could, even in principle, be life without death). The *Übermensch* understands, and lives by the fact that life and death are mutually dependent. Nietzsche suggests that *how* a life is lived is more significant than the fact that it will end. He shares the Zen view in saying 'How one dies is indifferent'. (HATH 46) According to Yasutani, no matter how death comes it is an illusion:

'Are you afraid of dying? You need not be. For whether you are killed or die naturally, death has no more substantiality than the movements of [...] puppets. Or, to put it another way, it is no more real than the cutting of air with a knife or the bursting of bubbles, which reappear no matter how often they are broken' (WD 8)

What I think of as my biological death, or the end of 'my' life is yet another transition in that birth and dying, beginning and cessation, that constitutes this life process. *Within* any life there is repetitious birth and death. What we think of as death is just such a transition but *between* lives. To unpack Yasutani's metaphors, the movements of the puppets are the appearance and disappearance of the illusory self against the background of the Buddha-nature. The cutting of the knife is death, and like death appears dangerous. In fact, if the knife cuts only air it cuts nothing. If there is no real substantial self to die, then at death nothing dies. Just as when bubbles burst others replace it, so if I die, one series of thoughts and sensations ceases but another series replaces it. Death is a transition *within* karmic processes.

In quite a literal sense, there is life after death in Nietzsche and Buddhism. Although death is not a transition from earthly life to a metaphysical realm, it is a transition from earthly life to earthly life. There is life after death because there is *another* life after death. In both Nietzsche and Zen there is no heaven or hell because the idea of a metaphysical realm is an illusion of the form the Indian Buddhists call *maya*. For Nietzsche it is an illusion of *herd morality*, and the Platonic and Christian metaphysics which is herd morality's historical antecedent and putative premise. Nietzsche chastises humanity in the grip of herd morality for its fear of death:

'[...] as if dying were of much consequence and meant the crossing of bridges of the most terrible kind - all this forbids our using death as a testimony concerning the living' (HATH 46)

Death would be the crossing of a kind of terrible bridge if it were the transition to a metaphysical heaven or hell. There would then be a metaphysical ground for the fear of death, a fear about one's metaphysical destination. If there is no heaven or hell there is nothing metaphysical to fear or hope for in death. In Nietzsche and Buddhism, there is no fear without hope and no hope without fear. To fear something is to hope that it will not happen. To hope for something is to fear that it will not happen. (We see here that suffering is essentially tied to hope.) Both Nietzsche and

the Zen Buddhists present the possibility of living without metaphysical hopes and fears. To hold out the *hope* of eradicating metaphysical hopes and fears would simply reinstate the fear that metaphysical hopes and fears could not be eradicated. Therefore, they claim to expose metaphysics as illusory, or at best irrelevant to the way life is most fully lived. In the *Übermensch* and the enlightened being the temptation to metaphysics has been *psychologically tamed*.

According to Nietzsche, how we think of death profoundly affects the way we live our lives. He thinks that if we think of death in the way we have been conditioned by the Judeo-Christian tradition, our lives become pessimistic and sluggish, gloomily and half-hearted. He says we can rethink death so that it becomes a psychologically positive force in life:

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DEATH. - The certain prospect of death could introduce into every life a precious, sweet-smelling drop of levity - and yet you marvellous apothecary souls have made of it an ill-tasting drop of poison through which all life is made repulsive! (HATH para. 322 p. 390.)

The psychologically indubitable fact that my life will end could lend to it a frivolity; a kind of reckless spontaneity which prohibits taking life too seriously. Like a game, life will be over so should be fully engaged in while it lasts. Rather than doing this, we allow our lives to be *haunted* by death:

'How everyone's shadow, his gloomy travelling companion stands behind him' (GS para 278 p. 215)

Nietzsche compares death, as misconstrued by us, to a drug or a poison. As a drug makes us half asleep or plunges us into illusion so death makes us half committed to our lives and burdened with metaphysical images. As a poison produces illness and ineffectiveness so death, as we foresee it, inhibits the living of life. Our concept of death makes life 'hideous'. It is as though our lives have been poisoned: If we are poisoned we are going to die. If we know we are poisoned we know we are going to die. Life is hideous precisely in the existentialist sense: *If we are going to die it would have been better not to have been born*. Facing death is so terrible that it would have been far preferable to have had no life at all than to have to live a life facing death as its end. After all, it really is going to happen to *you*.

In Nietzsche and Zen, there is no life without death. To ask for life without death is to ask for something as impossible as death without life. To ask for birth without death is to ask for something as impossible as death without birth.

Yasutani says:

'We die because we are alive. Living means birth and death. Creation and destruction signify Life.

When you truly understand this fundamental principle, you will not be anxious about your life or your death. You will then attain a steadfast mind and be happy in your daily life.' (WD 8)

The idea that we die *because* we are alive is open to several mutually consistent interpretations. *Dialectically*, it does not make much sense to speak of something dying unless it is alive (or unless it is the sort of thing that can be alive). Life and death are, perhaps, reciprocally dependent opposites, for example, if *each is the absence of the other*. Although (or because) life and death are *opposites* they are mutually dependent or, at a profound level, two aspects of one and the same process. *Causally*, in order to die it is necessary to be alive. Only those beings that are alive may die. When Yasutani says that we die *because* we are alive he means that our being alive makes us die; our being alive is causally sufficient for our death. Anything alive is under the sentence of death. This is consistent with the painful truth that it is a contingent fact that we die: a fact that could have been otherwise. It does not follow as a matter of *logic* from the fact that I am alive that I will die. There is no incoherence or inconsistency in the thesis that I am immortal. 'I will not die' is not contradictory, just false. As a matter of human necessity I will die.

Yasutani says 'living means birth and death'. This is partly the thesis that what lives began to live and will cease to live. Read that way, birth and death are boundaries to living, or to a life. 'Living means birth and death' is also an expression of the Zen thesis that there is a kind of birth and death at every moment within life: a psychological coming to be and ceasing to be of thoughts and sensations, including the illusory thought or sensation of a substantial self. Living in the sense of *living one's life* implies this constant sequence of births and deaths.

Yatusani says 'creation and destruction signify life' because biologically, the cells composing an organism are coming into existence and ceasing to be and because animal life sustains itself by eating, digesting, and therefore destroying, plant and other animal life. Nutrition requires destruction, or at least, a physical transformation which, from the standpoint of the human world, we label 'destruction'. Reproduction requires creation, creation out of the earlier destruction. Yasutani and the Zen Buddhists see creation and destruction as two aspects of the same process. We are misled into thinking they are *only* opposites, and not also mutually dependent, because in perceiving or thinking of destruction, creation is usually hidden and in perceiving or thinking of creation, destruction is usually hidden. Arguably, creation and destruction are hidden by one another. We do not have to read Yasutani as saying that 'creation and destruction' mean exactly the same as 'life'. There could be creation and destruction without life: the inorganic and non-conscious shifting of continents, or creation of mountains by glacial deposits, for example. He is not saying creation and destruction imply life but that life implies creation and destruction. Yasutani thinks that once the mutual dependence of birth and death, creation and destruction are grasped then fear of death is dissipated.

Nietzsche also thinks our concept of death thoroughly informs our attitude to life and makes a difference to who we are:

'The whole way in which a man thinks of death in the prime of his life and strength is very expressive and significant for what we call his character' (HATH 46)

Were I to be correctly identified with my body or my soul then there would be genuine grounds for my fear of my own destruction. God could perhaps destroy my soul, and my body will in any case be dissolved in natural, biological death. If I am my soul, and my soul is destroyed, then I am destroyed. If I am my body, and my body is destroyed, then I am destroyed.

In Zen the self is 'reduced' to what we would normally think of as the psycho-physical stream of events constituting a person's life (or, in Nietzsche and Buddhism, lives). There are different kinds of reduction. If the self is reduced to a set of events then it is nothing 'over and above' them, that is, the self is identical with those events and so *nothing more than* or *nothing other than* those events. That the self is reducible to a set of psycho-physical events might mean that 'self' and 'set of psycho-physical events' have the same reference even though they differ in sense. In what sense is the self 'reduced' to a set of psycho-physical life processes in Zen? Roshi Yasutani gives this example of the absence of the fear of death:

'Even though heaven and earth were turned upside down, you would have no fear. And if an atomic or hydrogen bomb were exploded, you would not quake in terror' (WD 8)

and provides this explanation of the possibility of overcoming that fear:

'So long as you became one with the bomb what would there be to fear? "Impossible!" you say. But whether you wanted to or not you would perforce become one with it, would you not?' (WD 8)

What is it to become 'one with the bomb'? By 'the bomb' is meant the explosion of the bomb. It at least follows from this identification that it is false that there are two things: myself and the explosion of the bomb. Rather, *the explosion of the bomb is part of the same psycho-physical life process in which the sensation of self also intermittently appears*. At the moment of the explosion of the bomb there is only the *experience-of-the-exploding-of-the-bomb*. (Following the German and French existentialists) I hyphenate this expression to signify that the items it refers to are not separable in reality (only in thought, or conceptually, or in language). The event is *one*, precisely not the tripartite structure *I, experience* and *explosion*. In particular; *there is no sensation of 'self' or 'me' as the victim of that explosion*. This concept of death in an atomic explosion is very different from the idea of a human being caught in its blast. Clearly Yasutani does not deny that, on one level, that is exactly what

happens. Viewed objectively, or from a third-person perspective, a human body is vaporised by the force of the explosion. Indeed, this is the point of his saying that *you* would become one with the bomb whether you wished to or not. The particles of one's own body and the particles of the bomb would be intermingled in the explosion. One's body would be 'caught up' in the explosion, that is, become a vaporising part of it.

From the subjective point of view of the enlightened person dying in the explosion, or shortly before dying, this objective picture of the death of the body is not available or, if it is, it is just one thought amongst others. If it occurs then it carries no greater or less psychological weight than any other mental process. In *Satori* one is, so to speak, not 'touched' by one's own mental processes. Even if there is fear, it is not *felt as* fear and that is perhaps as good as its not being fear. In what sense, then, am I reduced to the explosion? Clearly, from the objective or third person perspective I am vaporised. I become nothing over and above the rush of vaporising particles. Psychologically, or inwardly, there is only the experience-of-the-exploding-of-the-bomb. There is no experience of myself plus the explosion. In the enlightened state there is not acquaintance with three things: myself, the explosion and a relation between them called 'experience'. Rather, there is just the monism of experience itself. In dying in the explosion there is only the explosion. I am 'nothing over and above' the explosion. The explosion is all-here-now.

Consciousness of death is intimately bound up with consciousness of time. We think of death as the future and inevitable end of our lives, as though at any point in life one exists at some time intermediary between birth and death. As life progresses, the time that one has been alive becomes ever greater, the time that there remains to live becomes ever shorter. Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists hold that this picture of death causes a pessimism that spoils the present. Death is a distraction from life. In particular, for Nietzsche, it causes us to live our lives 'ahead' of ourselves and to devalue the past:

'And all, all, suppose that the past has been nothing, or a small matter, that the near future is everything: hence this haste, this crying, this self-deafening and self-overreaching!' (GS para 278 p. 215)

The irony of this attitude to time is that, on its own terms, the only certainty it holds is death. We are keen to be in the future even though the end of the future is the very death we fear:

'Everyone wants to be foremost in this future, - and yet death and the stillness of death are the only things certain and common to all in this future!' (GS para 278 p. 215)

There is an intuitive, or unargued, asymmetry in our attitude to past and future. We anticipate with pleasure a pleasurable future event but view with trepidation an

unpleasant future event. Although there is such a thing as hoping or fearing that something has happened, hopes and fears are paradigmatically about the future. I do not normally fear having been tortured (although this is not impossible). From the point of view of Nietzsche and Zen, our emotional commitments will cease to touch us when our attention is directed to the present. The present is *when our experiences happen*. The present is the only time when our hopes and fears are realised. Hopes and fears distort the present and prevent one from being 'all here now'.

The Zen Master Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769) is famous for halting the decline in Rinzai influence by restoring strict meditation on the *koan*. He is credited with first posing *What is the sound of one hand clapping?* Hakuin warns against construing Enlightenment as a kind of life after death, or, indeed, *any* kind of future state:

'[...] it is extremely foolish to think that one must wait till after death in expectation of obtaining all these benefits [of *za-zen* meditation]. It is also the most culpable negligence. Do not grieve as though this is all a matter of something in the far distance.' (WD 9)

Enlightenment is not a kind of metaphysical immortality but *a disclosure of the present*; a profound recognition that *the ever changing present is all there is*. Although directed towards the past and the future, hopes and fears arise and subside only in the present. Everyone is already enlightened. The difficulty is disclosing this state. Even though, in an obvious temporal sense, a person is unenlightened at an earlier time and enlightened at a later time, emphasising this chronological sequence is itself an obstacle to Enlightenment. It keeps the mind in its future orientation when it is the aim of Buddhism to bring about the realisation that everything is present. Viewed in that way, the ending of each present thought or sensation is itself a kind of death. As the *Haiku* poet Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) puts it

'[...] every moment of life is the last' (WD 65)

What we think of as death is in fact akin to the ending of one thought or experience and the beginning of another. There is no more to fear in death and rebirth than in the ordinary arising and falling away of our psychological states. You, if it makes sense to talk of you, are dying all the time anyway. As master Dogen puts it

'We are being born and we are dying at every moment' (WD 9)

In the present, which is all there is, there is incessant coming to be and ceasing to be. This is not just everything anyone has ever come across. It is all anyone ever is.

It is common to Nietzsche and Zen that we repress the fear of death. We prefer not to think about our own death. Nietzsche finds this odd, given that it is the only certainty:

'How strange that this sole thing that is certain and common to all, exercises almost no influence on men, and that they are the furthest from regarding themselves as the brotherhood of death!' (GS para 278 p. 215)

The background fact of our own mortality does lend a particular urgency to life for many human beings. It is because we will die that we leave legacies, in children or in work. It is a psychological fact that if we knew or believed we were to live forever we would live differently; perhaps less urgently, perhaps with boredom, perhaps with agoraphobic terror. Nietzsche does not disapprove of the repression of the thought of death. He thinks it makes us concentrate more on living:

'It makes me happy to see that men do not want to think at all of the idea of death! I would fain do something to make the idea of life even a hundred times more worthy of their attention' (GS para 278 p. 216)

As we shall see in Chapter Four, it is the doctrine of eternal return which is supposed to achieve exactly that.

Zen, in contrast, requires a direct psychological confrontation with death. Master Sakuma Shozan (1811-1864), the son of a samurai, is noted for his contribution to introducing Western military and naval technology to Japan.

He was assassinated by a *hitokiri* (human-slayer) hired by those who resisted westernization as incompatible with the preservation of Japanese culture. The following conversation is reported between Shozan and one of his monks:

'A man said to the master, "Of course I never think of death." To which the master responded, "That's all very well, but you'll not get very far in Zen, I'm afraid' (WD 10)

It is not just that the monk seeks to impress the master, in hypocritically misguided disingenuousness. Concentration on death is part of the path to Enlightenment. In Shozan's reply, 'man of Enlightenment' does not mean 'enlightened person', it means something like 'person clearly advanced on the path to Enlightenment':

'That you do not think of death shows that you are not a man of Enlightenment, because you are incapable of knowing your Self, whatever there is in you that uses the six sense organs' (WD 10)

The considered view of Buddhism that there is no self, no physical or psychical source of one's own thoughts and emotions, is facilitated by wondering what will die when *I* die. Once the utter fruitlessness of this quest is seen, Enlightenment follows. No one dies. No one searches for who dies.

This contemplation of death must not be confused with any metaphysical or intellectual inquiry into life after death. As Nietzsche thinks the contemplation of

death is a distraction from life, the Zen Buddhist masters think speculation about immortality is an impediment to *Satori*. In a Zen monastery, a stock reply to a monk's inquiry about life after death goes like this:

"Why do you want to know what will happen to you after you die? Find out who you are now!" (WD xvii)

Satori requires 'being all here now', or allowing one's attention to be wholly present. Metaphysical speculation is *thinking*, trying to grasp an elusive content of thought. *Satori* requires *experience*, now, rather than thinking this thought or that.

In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, in the ninth discourse of Zarathustra, called 'The Preachers of Death', Nietzsche distinguishes between attitudes to death. More accurately, he distinguishes several *types of person* in terms of their ways of living life in the face of death:

'There are preachers of death: and the earth is full of those to whom desistance from life must be preached' (Z 49)

The preachers of death are the theologians and philosophers who insist there is a metaphysical afterlife. Those to whom desistance from life must be preached are the people who need this metaphysical reassurance. They only half live their lives because they are metaphysically distracted from the reality of the present by their hopes and fears of a hereafter. Then there are 'the superfluous';

'Full is the earth of the superfluous; marred is life by the many-too-many. May they be decoyed out of this life by the "life eternal" (Z 49)

Nietzsche thinks the existence of heaven would make earthly existence redundant. This is a problem for any philosophy which contrasts the perfection and happiness of a metaphysical afterlife with the imperfection and suffering of the empirical world. For example, Plato contrasts the communion of the soul with the perfect immaterial forms, with the moral imperfection and unhappiness of existence in the spatio-temporal world. The metaphysically embarrassing problem is *Why should there be earthly existence?* If there is a perfect life after death (or before birth) what need is there for being in the empirical world? What is the point in being born? As Nietzsche puts it, such life on earth is 'superfluous'. Nietzsche is impatient with those who endorse any metaphysical picture that generates this problem and says they deserve their metaphysics.

A third response to life in the face of death is that of 'the terrible ones':

'There are the terrible ones who carry about in themselves the beast of prey, and have no choice except lusts or self-laceration. And even their lusts are self-laceration.

They have not yet become men, those terrible ones: may they preach desistance from life, and pass away themselves!' (Z 49)

The terrible ones either try to compensate for death by over indulgence in sensuous gratification or they punish themselves, as though they perversely acquiesce in death. Their lusts are themselves self-laceration because it is a paradox of hedonism that the direct attempt to find pleasure leads to suffering. It is also an important part of the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* that immediate sensory gratification leads to later suffering.

Another response to death is apathy and depression:

'There are the spiritually consumptive ones: hardly are they born when they begin to die, and long for doctrines of lassitude and renunciation.

They would fain be dead, and we should approve of their wish! Let us beware of awakening those dead ones and of damaging those living coffins' (Z 49-50)

Nietzsche is suggesting, perhaps, that there is an affinity between the attitudes of ascetic renunciation and apathy in life. Both have in common a lack of interest in life. Indeed, Nietzsche devotes Part III of *The Genealogy of Morals* to a sustained critique of asceticism.

In a sense, in both Nietzsche and the Zen, birth and death are the *same* event. 'Birth' and 'death' are different names for the *transition* from one life to the next. For example Master Dogen says

'Birth from the Buddhist point of view is a temporary point between the preceding and the succeeding, hence it can be called birthlessness. The same holds for death and deathlessness. In life there is nothing more than life, in death nothing more than death' (WD 9)

What is a temporary point? The use of the predicate 'temporary' here suggests that birth or death has a duration, but a finite duration. The use of 'point' suggests that birth or death is instantaneous, or at a time that takes no time. The two views are incompatible because it is impossible that some event both takes and does not take time. That Dogen talks of birthlessness and deathlessness suggests that his considered view is that birth or death is instantaneous. Birth or death is an event, but an event without duration. The idea that there are instants is not incoherent because there are times that do not last. Suppose it is three o'clock. If we ask *How long has it been three o'clock for now?* the answer is *For no time at all*. Nevertheless, at some time or other, it is three o'clock.

Master Dogen thinks that our ordinary picture of life as the period bounded by birth and death is not wholly wrong, but misleadingly incomplete:

'It is fallacious to think that you simply move from birth to death' (WD 9)

It is fallacious because what I think of as my birth was also one of my deaths, and what I think of as my death will also be one of my births. Besides, there is no 'you' or 'me' who exists at one moment of life and then another. There is no self, or being who lives first one part of life then another, rather, *I am my life*. More accurately, *I am my lives*.

Suffering has a crucial role in both Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen. In both philosophies there is an intimate connection between suffering and death. Nietzsche thinks that the contemplation of death leads to pessimism in life and hence psychological suffering. Some people essentially see only death in life;

'They meet an invalid, or an old man, or a corpse - and immediately they say: "Life is refuted!"

But they only are refuted, and their eye, which seeth only one aspect of existence' (Z 50)

The fact that we will die spoils life;

'Shrouded in thick melancholy, and eager for the little casualties that bring death: thus do they wait and clench their teeth' (Z 50)

Nietzsche endorses the Buddhist view that much of life is indeed suffering but says some people mistakenly want to end their lives because that seems to promise an end to suffering:

"Life is only suffering": so say others, and lie not. Then see to it that ye cease! See to it that the life ceaseth which is only suffering!' (Z 50)

If Buddhism admitted the concept of sin suicide would be a sin in Buddhism. In fact, in Buddhism suicide is not so much immoral in any metaphysical sense but not in one's interests, and conducive to the suffering of others. Suicide is inconsistent with Nietzsche's insistence that we affirm life;

'[...] they want to be rid of life; what care they if they bind others still faster with their chains and gifts!' (Z 50-1)

Suicide does not end suffering on either philosophy because death does not end suffering. Death is the start of another life and that new life will include suffering. Master Dogen advises

'In life identify yourself with life, at death with death' (WD 9)

In Zen terms, what is advised here is a recognition of the truth. What does 'identify' mean? It does not just mean *psychologically identify*, even though *thinking of oneself as one's life* is a true way of thinking. It means *being one's life* and then, *being one's death*. It means, in the English idiom, 'being at one with' one's life and death. Ontologically, we have no other option according to Buddhism. We are our lives. Thinking of life after death is a distraction from being 'at one' with the life one is, now.

The desire to escape death is the most profound of all desires because it is the most deeply felt and many other kinds of desire psychologically depend on it. Zen offers techniques for ending desire and, therefore, ending the desire to escape death. Part of what Dogen means by identifying oneself with death, at death, is *not desiring to escape death*. He also means that in death one is one's death. At death there are not two things, myself and my death, rather, I am my death. The Buddha not only claims an intimate connection between desire and death. He says something extraordinary to non-Buddhist ears. He claims that *the eradication of desire eradicates death*:

'Where obsessive desire is absent, there is neither coming nor going, and where coming and going have ended there is no death, no birth; where death and birth do not exist there is neither this life nor an afterlife, nor any in between - it is, disciples, the end of suffering' (WD 7)

A putative hierarchy of dependencies is established here. If there is 'coming' or 'going', or both, there is 'becoming': Desire is necessary for becoming. Becoming is necessary for birth and death. Birth and death are necessary for this life and an afterlife. This life, or an afterlife, is necessary for suffering. The most counter intuitive of these claims is 'desire is necessary for becoming (or coming or going)'. Suppose we endorse a process ontology (as both Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists do) then, in a quasi-Heraclitean way, everything that is, is really becoming. It is not even fundamentally true that there are *things* that become other *things*, or *things* that (undergo) change. Rather, change is so thoroughgoing that there are not even such relatively unchanging subjects of change as things. A physical object, for example, is a temporary constellation of space-time processes. It seems strangely idealist to say that the truth of this process ontology depends upon desire. Why should what seems an objective and pervasive fact about the universe depend upon a fact about human minds?

To understand this we have to understand something about some kinds of Buddhist meditation. In meditation there is a profound and expansive peace of mind. Nevertheless, it is natural in meditation, as in ordinary life, for thoughts and emotions to arise and subside. Meditation, however, prevents desires being *felt as* desires. One's *emotional attitude* is detached from the *content* of the desire. Once this happens greater peace is experienced. With practice, a point is reached in meditation when there is no thought, only an alert yet peaceful and expansive awareness. It is desire that causes thought, so, with the cessation of desire thought ceases. It is in that

state that there is 'no becoming' or 'neither coming nor going'. The question about whether becoming is only psychological or is a fact about the external world does not arise in this state. The phenomenology of the state does not admit of an inner/outer or psychological/physical) distinction.

It is intuitively plausible that without becoming, or change, there cannot be any birth or death, any transition from one life to another. Any such transition *logically entails* the existence of becoming, or change. Birth and death are necessary for a life or an afterlife, if any life begins and ends, because birth and death are the beginning and the end of a life. A life or afterlife is necessary for suffering because suffering only occurs *in* a life so without a life there can be no suffering. If this hierarchy of dependencies obtains, as the Buddha holds, then *suffering depends upon desire*. It follows that the eradication of desire is sufficient for the eradication of suffering. We should turn now to what suffering means, for Zen and for Nietzsche.

The End of Suffering

Buddhism, including Zen, is essentially a cure for suffering. Rather than a religion in the Western sense, Zen is practical psychotherapy. The Buddha's First Noble Truth is a description of what suffering (*dukkha*) consists in:

'Birth is *dukkha*, decay is *dukkha*, sickness is *dukkha*, death is *dukkha*, so also are sorrow and grief [...]. To be bound with things which we dislike, and to be parted from things which we like, these also are *dukkha*. Not to get what one desires, this also is *dukkha*. In a word, this body, this fivefold aggregation based on clutching (*trishna*), this is *dukkha*.' (WD 46)

There seems to be a clear and decisive disagreement between Nietzsche and Zen on suffering. Because Zen offers a *cure* for suffering it follows on the Zen view that it is possible to cure suffering. Whilst acknowledging that everyone wants an end to their suffering Nietzsche seems to regard this as wholly impractical:

'You want if possible - and there is no madder "if possible" - to abolish suffering' (BGE p. 155 Para 225) (old ref. p. 170)

Indeed he has little patience with philosophies of compassion:

'there are higher problems than the problems of pleasure and pain and pity; and every philosophy that treats only of them is a piece of naïveté' (BGE para. 225 p. 156)

It is not right that Zen deals *exclusively* with suffering, but it is nearly right. Anything that furthers suffering is not Zen. Buddhism, and therefore Zen, is a philosophy of compassion. It seems that Nietzsche might well count Zen as a naïveté.

Nevertheless, some of Nietzsche's statements on the relation of philosophy to suffering are more ambivalent. For example he says

'Every art and every philosophy may be regarded as a healing and helping appliance in the service of growing suffering, life: they always presuppose suffering and sufferers' (GS 332)

Nietzsche agrees with the Zen Buddhists that life as it is ordinarily lived entails suffering. Because every art and philosophy is 'in the service' of life it is, whether this is understood or intended or not, in the service of suffering. Furthering life is, ironically, furthering suffering.

Nietzsche also says all arts and philosophies presuppose suffering. There are different kinds of presupposition. Arts and philosophies *causally* presuppose suffering and sufferers because they causally depend upon artists and philosophers. These are people who are alive, and, because life involves suffering, they are sufferers. It is harder to see how the existence of arts and philosophies *logically entails* suffering, but a case could be made out for this. If we take the claims of all the arts and all the philosophies together, then some of those claims are about the whole of ordinary human lives. If we accept that ordinary human lives involve suffering at some point, and this cannot be omitted in any complete account of them, then those arts and philosophies are partly about suffering.

Zen also presupposes the existence of suffering. Although this presupposition falls short of logical entailment (except through the premise that monks lead lives), the point or *raison d'être* of Zen in theory and practice is the elimination of suffering. Zen presupposes suffering rather as a medical cure presupposes disease or illness.

Nietzsche distinguishes between

'two kinds of sufferers [...] those who suffer from overflowing vitality [...] those who suffer from reduced vitality' (GS 332)

Those who suffer from reduced vitality are pessimistic and apathetic and

'Great natures [...] suffer most severely from the ignoble, petty emotions of certain evil moments' (GS 206)

The great suffer 'from doubt of their own greatness' (GS 206).

Here there is a crucial similarity between Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen. *It is essentially our own thoughts which cause our suffering.* Hopes and fears about the future, regrets about the past, resentments at petty insults or refusals to recognise our status, frustrated imaginings of happiness; these are the constituents of our ordinary thought worlds which make us suffer. Nietzsche says

'the remedy for "the distress" is distress' (GS 85)

He means the remedy for pessimistic thought and negative emotions is *severe* suffering. Much mental torment comes from what Nietzsche regards as a tacit background assumption of most of our daily life:

"existence is something evil" (GS 85)

To put it less dramatically, many human beings treat their lives as a problem. It is an important part of Zen not to treat life as a problem. The main problem in life arises from assuming that life is a problem. If we cease to treat life as a problem it largely ceases to be a problem.

The practice of the kind of Buddhist meditation called *za-zen* has as one of its aims the elimination of torturing thoughts. We may understand this on different levels. *Za-zen* allows one to think the thoughts one wishes to think, rather than being simply 'subject to' thoughts. This is by no means a licence for wishful thinking, which is an obstacle to Zen. It is obtaining control over the contents of one's own mind. *Za-zen* also allows an emotional detachment from one's thoughts. Although in meditation thoughts may arise and subside, they are permitted to arise and subside, dispassionately. Finally, in *za-zen* there is reached a point when there are no thoughts, only empty but alert awareness. Nietzsche says

'[...] worst of all are petty thoughts. Truly, better even to have done wickedly than to have thought pettily!' (Z 113)

A Zen Buddhist would find this an exaggeration. The karmic effects of evil deeds are far more seriously detrimental than the thinking of petty thoughts. Nevertheless, the Zen Buddhist would agree that a life spent thinking petty thoughts is a life wasted in a kind of mental imprisonment; a daily imprisonment in the tormenting contents of one's own mind.

Nietzsche recognises something akin to *karma* when he says

'The evil deed is like a boil: it itches and irritates and breaks forth - it speaks honourably. (Z 113)

Guilt, shame, and bad conscience are consequences of an evil deed that are as hard to escape as the discomfort of a physical boil. Nietzsche contrasts the evil deed with the petty thought:

'But the petty thought is like a canker: it creeps and hides and wants to appear nowhere. (Z 113)

Buddhism recognises that our thoughts hide. Our minds trick us. We find ourselves thinking about something even (or especially) when we have decided not to think

about it, doing something when we have resolved not to do it, desiring something when we desire not to desire.

In both Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen, there is an intimate and complex set of causal relationships between suffering and desire. As the Buddha suggests in The First Noble Truth, not to obtain what we desire causes suffering. Also, the frustrated desire to be separated from some thing, person or situation causes suffering. (Of course, I can unwittingly or forgetfully possess what I desire, or unknowingly be released from a burden, so desiring does not *logically* presuppose the non-possession of the desired.) More subtly, it is part of Buddhism that we are emotionally attached to our ordinary thought processes by something appropriately called 'desire'. Our emotions 'pull' our thoughts at least *as though* we desired to think them. To suffer through frustrated desire for something requires thinking about that thing. If the emotional attachment to the thought could be broken, the frustrated desire would end. Nietzsche says people have a desire for suffering:

'The Desire for suffering [...] I conceive that there must be a desire in them to suffer something, in order to derive from their suffering a worthy motive for acting, for doing something. Distress is necessary!' (GS 90)

Nietzsche is talking about the rather perverse tendency to tacitly welcome suffering, so that one may appear strong in overcoming it, or pitiable in being subject to it. It would be wrong to say that there is a *desire* for suffering according to Zen, but there is a causal dependence of suffering on desire. That mental torment that we cause to ourselves depends on desire.

Partly in reaction to Schopenhauer's pessimism, and partly as social comment, Nietzsche prescribes the life-affirming philosophy of the *Übermensch* and condemns the perverse 'enjoyment' of suffering:

'This young world desires that there should arrive or appear from the outside - not happiness - but misfortune; and their imagination is already busy beforehand to form a monster out of it, so that they may afterwards be able to fight with a monster' (GS 90-1) 56

Both the *Übermensch* and the Zen Buddhists are the opposite of what Nietzsche calls the 'distress seekers' (GS 91)

Although Buddhism is a philosophy of compassion, the Buddha preaches compassion for all living things, Zen has, if not a streak of brutality, then a certain severity. Zen training is frugal and austere, eschewing the comfortable or the complacent. Nietzsche's advice is:

'[...] if you have a suffering friend, be a resting-place for his suffering, but a resting-place like a hard bed, a camp-bed: thus you will serve him best.'

(Z 113)

The Zen monastery is a resting place from suffering but not a comfortable one. It is a zone where one is trained to be free from suffering. The training is hard, involving early rises, simple food, menial tasks, obedience and self-discipline, physical stamina and hours of meditation each day. The beds are hard too.

Because Zen is compassionate, it is a requirement that any suffering caused to a Zen monk be forgiven by that monk. Revenge is out of the question. Nietzsche too advises forgiveness but makes an astute remark which a practitioner of Zen would probably endorse:

'And should your friend do you a wrong, then say: "I forgive you what you did to me; but that you did it to yourself - how could I forgive that?"'

(Z 114)

It is a counter intuitive but often repeated tenet of Buddhism that in harming someone I harm myself more than I harm that person. Independently of Buddhism, we might think that this sometimes happens. The guilt I feel about having lied might be worse than the consequences of the lie to the person I lied to. Of course, they might not. Normally, however, we would not think the guilt of a murderer a worse consequence than the death he caused. Buddhism, however, holds that always and everywhere in harming someone I harm myself more than that person. Because of *karma*, the adverse consequences of my thoughts and actions will be experienced in the future and possibly in many lifetimes to come. They will constitute what I am. What I *suffer*, what harm comes to me, does not have these karmic effects. Nietzsche's view is not as extreme as this, but he implies that in harming someone one harms oneself. Nietzsche means that what a person does to himself is unforgivable in the sense that it should not be forgiven. I can forgive a person for what they do to me. I can, under certain circumstances, forgive them for what they do to someone else. Could I forgive them for what they do to themselves? This seems to be possible if the harm someone does to himself *also* harms others. For example, if a person attempts suicide, their friends or relatives might be meaningfully said to forgive him for what he did to himself, but this is only because they are shocked or upset by what he did.

If Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen were not atheistic it would be tempting to say that they distinguish different degrees of spiritual advancement. In Nietzsche, most human beings, in differing degrees, fall short of being *Übermenschen*. In Zen, most human beings, in differing degrees, fall short of being enlightened. It follows that there is an implicit ranking of people in both philosophies. This ranking, or degree of advancement, is related to suffering. Nietzsche says

'the extent to which a man can suffer almost determines the order of rank'

(CW 77)

This is partly because, for Nietzsche, the ability to bear suffering shows courage, nobility, and strength of character. It is also because the sufferer gains wisdom:

'by virtue of his suffering he knows more than the shrewdest and wisest can ever know' (CW 77-8)

The sufferer is better acquainted with life than those who have not suffered. Suffering gives practical not just theoretical knowledge of what life and suffering are.

Zen does not rank people according to the degree of suffering they are able to *withstand*. It ranks them according to the amount of suffering they have *freed themselves from*. Buddhism is essentially freedom from suffering. Freedom from suffering is brought about by detachment; emotional detachment from objects of desire. One is, then, more or less a Buddhist to the extent that one has released oneself from suffering. Nietzsche says

'Profound suffering makes noble; it separates' (CW 78)

and he speaks of

'[...] a higher kind of health, a sort of health which grows stronger under everything that does not actually kill it' (CW 79)

In Zen, individuals who are very advanced in Zen training are able to withstand physical or emotional treatment that would cause great suffering to other people (or themselves prior to the training). They do not withstand this by withstanding suffering, however, they withstand it by not suffering. Nietzsche, on the other hand, is talking about people who withstand harm by withstanding suffering, not people who are so detached from pain and emotion as not to feel them. Nevertheless, it makes sense in both philosophies to talk of a 'higher kind of health'. Zen monks are rendered physically and mentally tough and rugged, and the peace and decisiveness produced by meditation could be called 'a higher kind of health'. So, of course, could *Satori* itself. Nietzsche says

'Only great suffering is the ultimate emancipator of spirit' (CW 79)

Buddhists claim that one becomes a Buddhist when suffering becomes intolerable. Nietzsche's work, *Human, All Too Human*, carries the subtitle, *A Book for free Spirits (Ein Buch für freie Geister)*. Free spirits, as both the German and the English idiom suggest, are free thinking people, even rather wayward people. The playful yet serious Zen monk who is emancipated from the ties of the conditioned world is a free spirit in Nietzsche's sense.

It is entailed by Zen that suffering is not necessary. Suffering can be cured by Zen, so there is no need to endure it. Nietzsche has the thought that at least *some* suffering is unnecessary, suffering premised on metaphysical or theological belief:

'To suffer for the sake of morality and then to be told that this kind of suffering is founded on an error: this arouses indignation. (DD para 32 p. 24)

We can suffer not merely because we do what we think is right and then find out it was wrong. We can discover that the distinction between right and wrong that we were assuming in our guilt or mortification is false and only historically inherited. In either case we now view our suffering as pointless. One can imagine cases where people fight in a war because they think their side is right. It later turns out that their erstwhile opponents had a much stronger moral case than their own side's propaganda allowed. The veterans now regard their suffering as pointless.

Despite their avowedly anti-metaphysical stance, Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists allow that there is a disclosure of reality. It is through suffering:

'For there is a unique consolation in affirming through one's suffering a "profounder world of truth" than any other world is' (DD para 32 p.24)

Nietzsche is not identifying the deeper world of truth with suffering. That would be at odds with his repudiation of Schopenhaurian pessimism. Rather, the route to the deeper world of truth is *through* suffering. The transfiguration of the human is enacted in suffering. It would be the antithesis of Buddhism to discover the truth to be the suffering (even though it is profoundly true that there is suffering). In Zen, the route to truth is *through* suffering, by the overcoming of suffering: by becoming the kind of being who no longer suffers.

In Nietzsche and Zen, the escape from suffering is difficult to achieve. We are ironically attached to suffering. Nietzsche says

'one would much rather suffer and thereby feel oneself exalted above reality [...] than be without suffering' (DD para 32 p. 24)

Similarly, many would prefer their ordinary life of *duhkha* to the severe training of the Zen monk, even though the latter promises an escape from suffering. Our ordinary habits of valuing and the desires they sustain cause suffering. As Nietzsche puts it

'Men have become suffering creatures in consequence of their morals' (DD 30)

In Buddhism, pride is a form of attachment to the origin of suffering. Nietzsche thinks pride keeps us imprisoned in the morality we have been conditioned into:

'It is thus pride, and the customary manner in which pride is gratified, which stands in the way of a new understanding of morality.' (DD para 32 p. 24)

In Zen, the person who has achieved *Satori* is able to view the world with a serene detachment. For Nietzsche a different kind of detachment by suffering:

'He who suffers intensely looks out at things with a terrible coldness' (DD para 114 p.69)

Both Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists think that by suffering it is possible to *dispell illusion*. This is not because it is hard to be in error about whether one is suffering. By and large if one thinks one is suffering one is. It is because unbearable suffering causes the sufferer to seek a cure for suffering. In Nietzsche and Zen, this cure requires exposing as illusions many of our supposed facts and values. Nietzsche says of the sufferer:

'If until then he has been living in some perilous world of fantasy, this supreme sobering-up through pain is the means of extricating him from it' (DD para 114 p. 69)

What Nietzsche calls 'dangerous fantasy' Buddhists subsume under the concept *illusion*. As we shall see in the next chapter, both Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists think that we largely inhabit a world that is our own mental construction. What we *think* is real is essentially a projection of our hopes and fears. This causes suffering, as reality repeatedly fails to meet our expectations.

A common response to suffering, including everyday frustrations, is *resentment*, or vengeful feelings. We perceive others as weak, malicious or ignorant as we seek causal explanations for our unhappiness. In Buddhism, these feelings count as catastrophic. Their *karmic* repercussions are more sufferings in lifetimes to come. Similarly, Nietzsche says

'Your revenge rebounds upon you yourself when you defame something' (DD para 214 p.134)

The Sixth Patriarch of Zen says the cure for resentment is the adoption of the following principle:

'When others are wrong I am in the wrong. When I have done wrong I alone am to blame' (WD 27)

The person who seethes with resentment is thereby unhappy. There is a clear sense in which he is the author of his own unhappiness. If he could stop the resentment he would be less unhappy. This psychological self-destruction is explicit in Buddhism. Narada Mahathera says

'We ourselves are responsible for our own happiness and misery. We create our own heavens. We create our own hells. We are the architects of our own fate' (WD 17)

Nevertheless, neither Nietzsche nor the Zen Buddhists envision a straightforward transition from suffering to happiness. There is a philosophical problem standing in the way of this. Happiness and unhappiness are dialectically related. In a quasi Hegelian sense, happiness and unhappiness are antithetical. Although semantically, psychologically and ontologically, opposites, happiness and unhappiness are mutually dependent on all three levels. It follows that one can no more abolish unhappiness and leave happiness as a residue that one may abolish up so that there remains only down. This dialectical dependence is implicit in Nietzsche's remark:

'without our ready tolerance of pain we should have to give up too many pleasures!' (DD para.354 p.166)

It is a commonplace (inexplicable by evolutionary theory) that many pleasurable human activities cause us suffering. Harmful and addictive drugs such as alcohol, heroin and nicotine bring disease and death. Sexual relationships might bring anxiety, emotional trauma, and disease. Overeating causes obesity and heart disease. These are specific instances of the dependence of happiness on unhappiness. Nietzsche says

'happiness and misfortune are brother and sister' (GS 267)

Nietzsche calls his suffering his dog:

'My Dog. - I have given a name to my suffering, and call it "dog", - it is just as faithful, just as importunate and shameless, just as entertaining, just as wise, as any other dog' (GS 244)

The metaphor is in many ways apposite. Suffering is *faithful* because it follows with inevitability certain kinds of thought and action. Suffering is *importunate* and *shameless* because it appears irrespective of one's wishes to the contrary. It is entertaining because it is just about possible to view suffering with wry, cynical, humour. It is wise because it teaches you about life. Nietzsche has already pointed out that we are ironically attached to our suffering. We are also attached to pet dogs. If Nietzsche were to push the metaphor to its Zen conclusion he would have to advise freeing the dog.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their endorsement of the quasi-Hegelian 'identity' (ie, mutual dependency) between happiness and unhappiness, Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists think this opposition may be transcended in a higher form of happiness. The transcendence is quasi-Hegelian because it is dialectical (or more accurately,

'speculative') even though both Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists reject the Hegelian idea of *Geist*, or any spiritual connotation to higher happiness.

The new happiness of the *Übermensch*, or the person in *Satori*, is the result of rejecting conventional values and the patterns of desires that supervene on them. This is not just an intellectual rejection. It is insight into the value system as only psychological. Nietzsche thinks that even those people who suffer little in the ordinary course of things do not approach the superior happiness of the *Übermensch*:

'Ah, how little you know of the happiness of man, you comfortable and good-natured ones!' (GS 266-7)

The Zen Buddhist in *Satori* is not emotionally affected by ordinary suffering. Nietzsche says of the *Übermensch*:

'the clamour of the present day, the noise of wars and revolutions, ought to be a murmur to thee' (GS 268)

However, both feel compassion towards those who suffer, and both seek to advance ordinary sufferers to the higher happiness. Despite his cynicism about philosophies of compassion, Nietzsche says:

'Thou wilt also want to help, but only those whose distress thou entirely understandest' (GS 268)

Full compassion presupposes full understanding of happiness. Only the *Übermensch* has that, because only the *Übermensch* has experience of it.

Those in *Satori* and the *Übermenschen* form a community, which Nietzsche calls a 'fellowship in joy'. (GS 268) The Buddha speaks of as the realm of *Satori*:

'Disciples, there is a realm in which there is neither earth nor water, fire nor air; nor endless space, infinite consciousness, nor nothingness; not perceptions nor nonperceptions. In it there is neither this world nor another, neither sun nor moon. I call it neither a coming nor a going nor a standing still; not death, nor birth; it is without basis, change, or stability. Disciples, it is the end of sorrow.' (WD 7)

Is There Any Point in it All?

Why does suffering exist? This question divides into a causal question and a question about reasons: *What causes suffering?* and *What is the point of suffering?* It might be assumed that evolutionary theory (which Nietzsche favours) explains why there is suffering: Species evolve pain receptors as warning systems, this facilitates their survival etc. However, evolutionary theory cannot answer this question: *Why does pain hurt?* Of course it *looks* as though evolution can answer that question: If pain

did not hurt it would not function as a warning system. However, this is giving a function not a cause of pain hurting. The hard questions are: *How come c-fibre stimulation produces hurt?*, *What is the hurt itself?* This is a version of the mind-body problem, and the truth of evolutionary theory is not sufficient to answer it. (Indeed, a neurological cause of adaptive behaviour that did *not* hurt would seem to perform the evolutionary task just as well.) I suggest that it is because a person is a soul that pain hurts. This only seems ridiculous or implausible to modern ears because the difficulty of the mind-body problem, and the reality of one's own existence, are underestimated within the modern scientific world-picture. *The brain is only billions and billions of atoms in motion in empty space.* That is what the brain is. C-fibre stimulation, and every other physical occurrence, is only billions and billions of atoms in motion in empty space. Now, the hurting sensation of pain is not one atom. It is not several atoms. It is not billions of atoms, no matter how arranged. A hurting sensation is something *qualitatively distinct* from billions of atoms in motion. The prospects of a scientific materialist explanation of pain are therefore precisely zero. Scientific materialism has never told us anything about pain *qua* pain and never will. *Scientific materialism only ever tells us about matter in motion*, and pain is not matter in motion.

Although c-fibre stimulation is physical, public and scientifically observable, the sensation of pain is non-physical, private, and opaque to science. The explanation of pain's being inner and private is its pertaining to the soul, its being felt or undergone. Although c-fibre stimulation is a (contingently) necessary condition for pain it is not sufficient. The occurrence of a sensation of hurt in the soul is sufficient for pain. That is the causal explanation of pain.

The question still remains: What is the reason why suffering exists? Indeed, it is one of the stock objections to the existence of God that suffering exists: God is omniscient, omnipotent and benevolent. It is bad that suffering exists. Therefore, either God does not know there is suffering (and he is not omniscient) or God cannot prevent the suffering (and he is not omnipotent) or he does not care to prevent the suffering (and he is not benevolent). If God lacks one of these attributes he is not God, or God does not exist.

It looks as though there could be a world without suffering, and this would be a better world. However, I suggest a world without suffering is for two reasons impossible.

Firstly, a world without suffering would be a world without joy. One might well ask for a world which only contains happiness as ask for light without dark or up without down or here without there. Suffering and happiness are opposites, but *opposites are mutually dependent*, so a world with no pain, no death, no bereavement, no frustration would also be a world with no pleasure, no life, no attachment, no fulfilment. Is it better that there should be a world with both pain and happiness rather than neither? I suggest it is. A world with neither would be a bland, insipid, neutral world (if these value judgements are even applicable to a world with neither suffering nor happiness). When Luther was asked whether happiness is the

goal of human life he replied: ‘Happiness? No. *Leiden! Leiden! Kreuz! Kreuz!* (Suffering! suffering; the Cross, the Cross!’) (quoted by Sir Isaiah Berlin in Bryan Magee *Men of Ideas* BBC, London, 1978 p. 22). I suggest that in a world without suffering there would be nothing to *live against*. Being fully human entails facing those human challenges presented by suffering. (Indeed, it is within the technological and political power of today’s decision-makers to cure or remove a great deal of suffering from the world but they do not do this.) The Nietzsche scholar Daniel Came has distinguished senses in which Nietzsche thinks suffering can be beautiful and provide an aesthetic enriching of life. Nietzsche is much closer to the Christian than he realises. For the Christian, there is beauty in Christ’s terrible suffering on the cross, spiritual beauty in Christ in his suffering.

Secondly, suppose, as Nietzsche rejects, God made the universe. If we understand with clarity the question: *Why is there a universe?* we see with equal clarity that the only plausible answer is: *God made the universe*. The reality which makes any plausible answer true is (in some non-spatial sense of ‘outside’) outside the universe. Whatever it is is not physical, or it would be part of the universe. Whatever it is is powerful enough to create the universe and wise enough to contain the reason for there being a universe. This reality can only be God. Suppose also that God is perfectly good. It then seems to me that God has to draw a distinction between what is on the one hand *his creation* and what is on the other hand *a part of himself*. If the universe did not contain suffering the universe would be an extension of God, a sort of hand of God. If the universe is God’s creation it has to fall short of God’s perfection, and this means containing suffering. Does this mean God is not omnipotent? Not at all. It is not any kind of constraint on God’s (or anyone else’s) power to be unable to do the impossible. It is only a limit on someone’s power not to be able to do the possible.

I suggest that God’s action is sufficient for the creation of the universe, and his sustaining the universe is necessary for its continued existence. However, I doubt very much that God constantly intervenes in creation in a way that is causally sufficient for every occurrence. This would not only make human free will impossible but also, again, blur the distinction between God and his creation. There is then a sharp distinction between God and creation. A kind of deism is by and large true even though, for example in response to prayer, God intervenes in creation. The response might well not be what we wish for.

THE ILLUSION OF THE WORLD

It follows from Buddhist doctrine that the world we think inhabit is not the world we inhabit. This is precisely Nietzsche’s view:

'Whatever standpoint of philosophy we may adopt today: from every point of view the erroneousness of the world in which we believe we live is the surest and firmest thing we can get our eyes on' (BGE para 34 p. 64) (cf also 48 ff.)

What does this mean? The passage bears several mutually consistent interpretations, but one of them concerns Christianity and another philosophical idealism.

Nietzsche's atheistic perspectivism is partly a sustained philosophical and historical critique of Christianity. Nietzsche maintains that although the metaphysical and ethical outlook of the West is essentially Christian, by the mid-nineteenth century this outlook is in profound crisis. His claim that God is dead is that fewer and fewer people believe in God. In so far as Christian faith is fundamentally shaken, all moral values that rely on Christian theological premises are undermined. They lack justification. It is not so much his own philosophical project to establish a new set of non-Christian values as to predict and urge the emergence of a new kind of human being who will freely create non-Christian values of his own: the *Übermensch*. The *Übermensch* will be beyond good and evil: beyond conventional, western, Christian, good and evil.

Read this way, the world in which we think we live is the Christian world, a world not only of other people and physical objects but also the existence of God, the divinity of Christ, the truth of the resurrection, the fall, purgatory, hell and heaven, the possibility of eternal salvation or eternal damnation. Nietzsche is saying that on any kind of philosophy contemporary with his own, atheism is true, or, to put it another way, this entire theistic world picture is false.

It is indeed possible to view nineteenth century European philosophy as increasingly atheistic. Although the Danish Lutheran philosophical theologian Søren Kierkegaard is a strongly committed theist, his bleak and pessimistic existentialism leaves logical and emotional room for doubting the existence of God. If the leap of faith can be taken it can be not taken. Although there can be no genuine Christian faith without the logical possibility of doubt, and if God's existence could be proven using logic there would be no need for faith, Kierkegaard's theism contrasts with that of his theistic predecessors. Not only the medieval scholastics, Anselm, Aquinas and Scotus but also the continental 'rationalists' Descartes, Leibniz and, in a way, Spinoza, thought the existence of God could be proven. They made strenuous efforts to prove the existence of God by philosophical argument. The arguments against arguments deployed by Hume in *The Treatise of Human Nature* and by Kant in *The Critique of Pure Reason* seemed to cast doubt on the possibility of proving the existence of God, and thereby contributed to the nineteenth century atheism Nietzsche draws our attention to. Nevertheless Kant attempted an 'ethical' proof of God's existence in his moral philosophy. Kierkegaard does not even attempt that.

Was Hegel a theist? Although in his private life the early nineteenth century German idealist espoused an orthodox protestantism, it is far from clear that this is logically consistent with the dialectical progress of Spirit as depicted in his *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. It is his considered philosophical view that Spirit, or *Geist*,

is the totality of what is. The whole of existence is *Geist* and if *Geist* is God then God is not only transcendent but also immanent in a way that pervades the spatio-temporal universe. God is what is. This pantheistic 'improvement' on Christianity, according to which human finite minds are aspects of one infinite mind or consciousness might well not be endorsed by an orthodox Christian. It is certainly not entailed by Christianity. It is a kind of Neo-Platonism.

Nietzsche's contemporaries are more obviously atheistic. Schopenhauer was an atheist. Franz Brentano, the Austrian philosophical psychologist, and Edmund Husserl, the Moravian phenomenologist if not atheists, provide God with no role in their 'empirical psychology' and early phenomenology respectively. The Kantian critique of the possibility of the proof of God's existence has been endorsed largely without question. In every significant pre-Kantian philosophy since the middle ages, with the exception of Hume's, God had a positive role. By Nietzsche's time, overtly at least, God has next to no philosophical role.

Nietzsche might well not have had this specific list of thinkers in mind when he remarked on the rise of atheism. They do show however that his historical claim is right. Although not all Buddhism is atheistic, Zen is clearly atheistic. Zen is not only consistent with Nietzsche's philosophy on this point but consistent with much nineteenth century European philosophy.

Just as Nietzsche's philosophy is an atheistic reaction against Christianity, so Buddhist philosophy as a whole may be regarded as an atheistic reaction against the metaphysics of Hinduism and Vedanta.

Perspectivism

On the other hand, we may examine Nietzsche's claim that the world in which we think we live is erroneous in relation to idealism. The kinds of idealism in philosophy essentially have in common the thesis that reality is ultimately mental. Someone who believes that is an idealist. Someone who does not is not an idealist. For example, Berkeley's thesis that in the case of physical objects to be is to be perceived (*esse est percipi*), by a finite or infinite mind, is an idealist thesis. Hegel's view that reality is ultimately dialectically constituted by *Geist* is an idealist thesis. Nietzsche's contemporary, the English philosopher F.H. Bradley thinks that the set of all the perspectives of finite minds is the Absolute, so he is an idealist. Kant is usually read as an idealist because his 'transcendental idealism' is usually taken to imply that empirical reality is psychologically constructed and the world as it is in itself is not spatio-temporal (and, therefore, not physical).

Now, although he shares Kant's perspectivism, it is clear that in all these senses of 'idealism' Nietzsche is not an idealist. Nietzsche thinks he is not doing metaphysics but idealism is a kind of metaphysics. When he says the world we think we live in is erroneous, he means it is not true. It is not the true world, as the world of a work of fiction is not the true world. He asks rhetorically

'Why could the world which is of any concern to us - not be a fiction? (BGE para 34 p.66)

Rather as someone reading a novel or watching a play is immersed in a world that is not real, so we in our daily lives are preoccupied with a world that concerns us that is not real. Nietzsche is suggesting that *we live in an imaginary world*.

Now, there is no reason to take this to mean that the ordinary physical objects and the other people who surround us exist only in our imaginations. Nietzsche does not hold that and, so far as I can tell, no philosopher has held that. However, what we take the world of objects and people to be is something that is only imaginary. We project onto the world our own hopes and fears, our desires and limitations. We try to use the world as a means to our own ends and this largely takes the form of perceiving it or conceiving it as a means to our ends. Nietzsche thinks we live out our lives in this imaginary or fictitious way. Much of our mental time is taken up with hoping, fearing, phantasising, worrying, in ways that correspond to very little outside our minds.

Nietzsche is aware of a possible limitation of the analogy with works of fiction. A work of fiction has an author, but one is not in any clear or direct sense the author of the imaginary world in which one lives out one's life. Nietzsche says:

'And he who then objects: "but to the fiction there belongs an author?" - could he not be met with the round retort: why?' (BGE para 34 p. 66)

From the fact that a work of fiction has an author it does not follow that that author is an *original creator*. An originator causes to exist something original, something without precedent, perhaps even without partial precedent. An originator creates something *ex nihilo*. An originator creates perhaps with freedom and undetermined spontaneity. An originator is a point of origin from which something emanates. Now, even if we are the authors of our own imaginary life-worlds, and even if a writer is the author of a work of fiction, it is doubtful that either is an originator in this very strong sense. The causal chain that runs from the author to his imaginary product has an origin that predates his work (if it has any kind of origin). A creator is caused to create. A creator is caused to create what he creates.

Nietzsche is not an idealist because he denies that only the mental is real. He does not think our imaginary world is the only world, or the real world. It is erroneous *because* it contrasts with the real, true, or practical world. It is a fiction because it is not a fact. Nevertheless, only our imaginary world is *given* to us as real:

'Granted that nothing is "given" as real except our world of desires and passions [...]'(BGE para 36 p.66)

Nietzsche's claim is ambiguous between the thesis that no one is ever directly acquainted with anything except the contents of their own minds and, on the other

hand, the thesis that our psychological preconceptions makes a difference to what is presented to us, how it strikes us. Read the first way, Nietzsche is embracing the quasi-Lockean view that I only directly know my own mind. Read the second way, Nietzsche is endorsing the quasi-Kantian view that one's preconceptions alter, or partly determine, the contents of one's perception.

Each view generates a different kind, or perhaps degree, of scepticism. On the quasi-Kantian view, the external world exists but it is not as we perceive it. It follows, at least psychologically, that we cannot perceive the world as it really is. We are cognitively ill-equipped to do that. Indeed, we are equipped to do the opposite. On the quasi-Lockean view, there might not be an external world. From the fact that one's own mental states exist it does not follow that there is an external world. One's experience could be *just like this* even if there is no external world. From the fact that one has a mind, and is directly acquainted with its contents, there is no valid inference to the existence of anything outside that mind.

Nietzsche is aware of both kinds of scepticism but it is that generated by the quasi-Kantian view that he is drawing our attention to when he says

'this which is "given" does not suffice, for an understanding even of the so-called mechanical (or "material") world' (BGE para 36 p.66)

Here the mechanical (or material) world is assumed to exist but this assumption is undermined on the quasi-Lockean view. The material world is at best postulated as a causal explanation of one's mental states. By 'this which is "given"' Nietzsche means our world of desires and passions. By 'our counterparts' he means our thoughts which more or less correspond to what they are about in the external world. Now, Nietzsche is saying that our imaginary world, the psychologically constructed world of desire in which we live, cannot provide *any* kind of explanation for what happens in the material world, the world outside our minds. It is in this sense that the world in which we think we live is erroneous. If we construe our thoughts as about the external world most of them are false, rather as if we construe our desires as about the external world most of them are unfulfilled. Indeed, most of them are desires for things that do not even exist outside our depictions in thoughts and cravings.

So, far from being an idealist, Nietzsche is saying that as a matter of practical fact we are not nearly so preoccupied with the real physical world, including other people, as we think we are. What we normally think of as the real world is really spun by our imagination. This is *incompatible* with idealism because it includes the view that there really exists a physical world that is ontologically independent of our psychologies. For all these reasons, I think Nietzsche has understood himself correctly when he explicitly distances himself from certain idealists. He says of the illusory or erroneous world

'I do not mean as a deception, an "appearance", an "idea" (in the Berkeleyan and Schopenhaueran sense), but as possessing the same degree of reality as our emotions themselves' (BGE para 36 p. 66)

Idealism is the attempt to reduce the external world to the internal world, to reduce the physical to the mental, the objective to the subjective. Idealists typically wish to translate claims about material reality into claims about non-material appearance. Nietzsche is not attempting any such reduction. Indeed, he is trying to do precisely the opposite. It is the fact that the external world *cannot* be logically reduced to our imaginary projections that makes the latter erroneous or imaginary. The external world is not the imaginary world.

Nietzsche thinks the content of our fictional world has as much reality as our emotions. Both are psychological. Both are felt or undergone. Both matter to us. We spend a great deal of mental time in both. Both are non-physical. Neither is part of the external world. Neither is either true of the external world: not our thought-world because it is erroneous, not our emotions because they are not the sorts of things that could be true or false.

Eating the Menu

Crucially, the Buddhist doctrine is no more idealist than Nietzsche. There is no doubt about this. Alan Watts warns from the outset that any idealist reading will be mistaken:

'Maya [...] in trying to grasp its meaning one must try to put aside the various "idealist" philosophies of the West with which it is often confused - even by modern Indian Vedantists' (WZ 40)

Maya, like the fictitious thought-world of Nietzsche, is an illusion that we mistake for the external world. In both philosophies, that there does exist an external world makes the illusion the illusion.

Having said this, there are many passages in Buddhist scripture which seem to lend support to an idealist construal. The fact is that *maya* does have a radically metaphysical and idealist meaning in the pre Buddhist philosophies of Vedanta and Hinduism from which Buddhism tries to distance itself. In Buddhism, *maya* is understood in a psychological rather than a metaphysical manner. I shall present some seemingly idealist construals in Buddhism and suggest non-idealist or weak idealist reading of them.

In the third series of his *Essays in Zen* D.T. Suzuki reports a conversation between Subutu and the Buddha. The Buddha asks Subhutu:

'Do you think Maya to be different from Rupam ['form'] and Rupam from Maya?' (ZB3 264)

Subhutu replies:

'No, Blessed One, they are not different. If Rupam is different from Maya, it is not Rupam; if Maya is different from Rupam, it is not Maya. Maya is Rupam and Rupam is Maya' (ZB3 264)

The Pali word *rupam* has several senses corresponding to philosophical uses of 'form'. 'Form' (besides narrowly meaning 'shape') denotes *what* something is. In this sense, it is semantically equivalent to 'essence' where something's essence is *what* that thing is. If we read *rupam* to mean 'essence' then it is difficult to avoid a strongly idealist reading if *maya* and *rupam* are identical: *Maya* is illusion, mere psychological phenomena, but *rupam* is *maya* so *rupam* is illusion, mere psychological phenomena. If *rupam* is essence, what everything is, then what everything is, is illusion, mere psychological phenomena.

One way of reading Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* entails that the form of what is (or is presented to us) is psychologically imposed by the human mind. For example, on this reading, it is taken seriously that space and time are 'forms of intuition' and appearances are rendered spatio-temporal by our perceptual faculties' apprehension of them. Similarly, the categories of unity, plurality, causation, and so on, are cognitively imposed on any sensory input to make it what it is, or at least, what it is to us. On this reading of Kant, it is not too misleading to say that the form, or the essence, of the world is psychologically imposed upon it by us. Nevertheless the *existence* of the world does not depend upon us. As a reading of Kant this interpretation is open to many criticisms which we cannot pursue here. (For example, with dubious consistency, Existence, or at least *Dasein*, is a Kantian category and so cannot be used to refer to a world beyond experience as this interpretation requires). What matters is that this reading of Kant looks very much like the doctrine as *rupam* as agreed between Subhutu and the Buddha. However enticing this analogy, it must be misleading if Alan Watts is right that *maya* cannot be understood on the model of Western idealism.

Another possibility is this. The medieval scholastic philosophers, following Aristotle, drew an important distinction between form and matter. In the case of a physical object, for example, St. Thomas Aquinas maintains that the *matter* of the object is the existing material or substance that the object is composed of. The *form* of the object is what the object is, the set of its properties. The properties of the object are the properties *of* the matter or substance that compose it. Now, in the perception of a physical object, or in the thought of a physical object, Aquinas maintains that *the form but not the matter of the object enter the mind*. It could be that this Thomist epistemology is closer to the idea than the quasi-Kantian model. Of course, there is one glaring asymmetry. In the case of mentally apprehending the form of an object according to Aquinas we perceive or think veridically but in the

case we think or perceive erroneously. Nevertheless the thesis that *form* is in the mind is common to both philosophies.

Subhutu adopts a position which is equally open to an idealist construal when he says:

'no distinction is to be made between all things and Maya or a dream; there is indeed between them no dualistic contrast' (ZB3 266)

This claim admits of a Cartesian interpretation. Descartes, in the *First Meditation*, entertains the sceptical logical possibility that the whole of his life is a dream. It follows on this account that 'all things', or at least what we take to be 'all things', would be a dream. Although Descartes' ontology is mind-body dualism, which is inconsistent with idealism, the *sceptical possibility* of life being a dream entails idealism because it implies that the physical objects that we ordinarily take to constitute the external world have only a psychological existence. Although Subhutu's claim does not rule out the Cartesian interpretation, there is nothing to force it either. To see this we may adopt a suggestion of Alan Watts. Watts says

'To say [...] that the world of facts and events is *maya* is to say that the facts and events are terms of measurement rather than realities of nature' (WZ 39)

On this understanding we make a mistake, a pervasive and systematic mistake. We mistake *our world-picture for the world*. We mistake *clock time for real time*. We mistake *feet and inches for physical distances*. We mistake *words and concepts for real things*. We mistake *our imaginings for the attitudes or behaviour of other people*. In Watts' acute image, *we eat the menu*.

If we eat the menu, it is not surprising that we feel uncomfortable. One reason why eating the menu is a mistake is that we neglect the meal. Living in one's imagination is not real living. On this view, *maya* is a *representation*, but not an accurate representation. Our problem is that we think the representation is itself reality.

A menu is of course written in a language. Watts thinks that language is essential to Maya:

'words are the *frames*, the meshes of its net' (WZ 45)

It is a familiar thought, from, for example Augustine, Vico and Kant, that the way in which the world is presented to us partly depends upon our linguistic taxonomy. In the crude and hackneyed metaphor, as a fishing net lets some fish pass through but captures others, so a language allows thought and talk about some things but not others. Just as a fishing catch might not be a representative sample of all the kinds of fish there are in the sea, so the ontology facilitated by a language might not be a true depiction of all there is. Just as the fish caught in our net are the only ones that break the surface of the water, so only the objects depicted in our language break into

consciousness. Languages are *pragmatic*. They allow us to perceive only enough of things to allow us to 'get by' in the world. We perceive objects essentially as means to our ends. We perceive only as much of an object as is necessary for it to serve those ends.

In Subhutu's conversation with the Buddha, we may read 'all things' to mean *all things we believe in* or *all things we take to be real*. It is those things which exist in a dream. The dream is in fact a *day dream*. Subutu is claiming that we ordinarily underestimate the extent to which our lives are spent day-dreaming. Much of what we take to be cognitive contact with the external world is in fact just day-dream.

Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists speak of the *Übermensch* or enlightened person as *awake*, or *awakened*. The dream from which these people have awakened is not nocturnal but the impressionistic sequence of day-dreams, which constitutes our conscious life, from when we wake up in the morning to when we go to sleep at night. The psychological difference between being awakened from ordinary day-dream consciousness and being subject to it is much greater than the psychological difference between being awake and being asleep, despite the appropriateness of using 'awake' or 'awakened' in both cases.

This transition from conditioned living to Enlightenment entails the exposure . The Buddha taught that:

'these five clinging Skandhas are no more than Maya itself' (ZB3 264) cf fn.

Skandha is usually translated as 'aggregate' or 'element'. The five *skandhas* are form (*rupam*), sensation (*vedana*), thought (*samjna*), conformation (*samskara*), and consciousness (*vijnana*). The empirical world, as we take it to be, is *constituted* through these five routes.

There is a strong affinity on the one hand between the Buddhist doctrine and Nietzsche's perspectivism and, on the other hand, between the 'Buddha nature' and Nietzsche's concept of the Will to Power. The content , and Nietzsche's perspectivism, is the conditioned empirical world. Its appearing as it does depends upon the subjective point of view of the perceiver. The Buddha nature for Buddhists, and the Will to Power for Nietzsche, is *fundamentally* all there is. The existence of anything else depends logically, causally, or in some other way, on the Buddha nature or the Will to Power. In both philosophies, the dispelling of illusion is revelatory of underlying practical reality. Nietzsche says

'The world seen from within, the world defined and designated according to its "intelligible character" - it would simply be "Will to Power," and nothing else' (BGE 52)

Suzuki says

'To understand the Maya theory is to perceive the suchness of things' (ZB3 267)

What is What is?

If the world is an illusion, two questions are presupposed: *Who is subject to the illusion?* and *What is reality?*

According to Nietzsche and Zen, *no-one* is subject to the illusion. Indeed, that there is anyone to be deceived is itself part of the illusion. If this were the case, I think we would have to give up talking about 'illusion' here. Unless someone or something is, or could, be deceived it does not make any sense to talk about an illusion. In particular, 'the self' or 'the subject' cannot be an illusion. Otherwise, who or what would be subject to the illusion that there is a self or subject? If there is the putative illusion of the self or subject, there is a self or subject. Therefore, the Zen and Nietzschean doctrine that the world, including the self, is an illusion is self refuting. It is false. Indeed, it might well be an illusion.

According to Nietzsche, there is no reality to contrast with illusion. There is no such thing as the way what is really is, to contrast with its illusory nature. On the Zen view, either a view like Nietzsche's is right, or else there is the emptiness of Satori, which is beyond the duality of illusion and reality. Now, it does not make much sense to say that there is illusion or deception but no reality. If nothing is the case, it is impossible to be tricked into the false view that something is the case. It follows that Nietzsche's view that there is no reality, only illusion, is false. Of course Nietzsche might still be right that the world as we ordinarily experience it is presented to us in a perspectival way, and its appearance is constituted by power relations. This might be importantly right. However, perspectives are perspectives *on*, that is, they are perspectives on something rather than nothing. If there are no facts, only interpretations, *something* is interpreted. The question is; What?

There is profound insight in the Buddhist view that it is possible to transcend the dualities of the empirical world. It is important to Zen that there should be meditative practice rather than the posing of metaphysical questions. Nevertheless, we might ask, What is Satori? Is Satori the disclosure of an ultimate metaphysical reality? Satori is beyond being and nothingness. Satori is beyond becoming. Becoming is the transition from being to nothingness or from nothingness to being. In Satori there is the cessation of becoming and, therefore, the cessation from being to nothingness or nothingness to being. Nevertheless, I hesitate to call this the transcendence of being and nothingness. I accept it is the transcendence of the empirical world, of this being this way, that being that way. It is, in my view, a synthesis of being and nothingness which I call *no-thing-ness*. No-thing-ness is a reality but not a physical or mental reality. Although, Zen practitioners will not engage in metaphysics, only practice, I maintain that no-thing-ness is a spiritual reality.

THE DOCTRINE OF NO-SELF

The question 'What am I?' is not the question 'Is a human being wholly physical ?' but the two are logically related. For example, if I am a human being, and if a human being is wholly physical, then I am wholly physical. If I am an irreducibly subjective and spiritual source of consciousness, and a human being is wholly physical, then I am not a human being. Implicit in the aphoristic writings of Nietzsche and Zen are answers to these two questions. Their considered view is that *the self is nothing*, and a human being is best viewed as a psycho-physical process. In reaching these conclusions they evaluate alternative philosophies of mind.

Nietzsche repudiates a kind of mind-body dualism and endorses a kind of materialism when he says

"Body am I, and soul" - so saith the child. [...]

But the awakened one, the knowing one, saith:

"Body am I entirely, and nothing more; and soul is only the name of something in the body." (Z 35)

Nietzsche has no argument here but tendentiously presents the dualist as immature and the materialist as 'awakened'. It is common to Nietzsche and Zen to ground philosophical views and their rejection in experience, or insight, rather than through *a priori* argument. In particular, the person who is awake *sees through* metaphysical illusion. Although the thesis that I am a body and a soul entails mind-body dualism, not every kind of mind-body dualism entails the existence of the soul. Dualism is the doctrine that nothing mental is physical, and nothing physical is mental, but both mental and physical items exist. For example, thoughts are mental on a dualist view and no thought is identical with any brain process. Perceptions are mental on a dualist view but no perception is identical with the physiology associated with it. Nobody who holds these views is thereby committed to the existence of the soul. The doctrine that the soul exists does not of itself entail mind-body dualism because it is consistent with idealism; the thesis that there are only minds, or only minds and their contents. The existence of the soul only entails mind-body dualism on the assumption that there are bodies and a person is, in a sense, both body and soul. This kind of dualism, according to which there are both mental and physical substances, is notably endorsed by Plato, St. Augustine, Descartes and the Hinduism of the Baghavad-Gita to which Buddhism, including Zen is a partial reaction. When Nietzsche's claim *Body am I entirely* is inconsistent with both kinds of dualism and contributes to answering 'What am I?'. It rules out the soul on the assumption that the soul is not physical and the soul is putatively what I am. It does not fully answer 'What am I?' because it is left wholly obscure *what I have said about myself* when I have said that *I am* my body. It is reasonably clear what I am *being identified with*: that living biological organism known as a human body. It is far less clear what it is that is claimed to be that when *I am* claimed to be that. What makes *I am my body*

true ? Nietzsche has no answer to this question. Nietzsche's position is inconsistent with the weaker kind of mind-body dualism on which there are mental events that are not physical, but no soul. *Soul is only the name of something in the body* means that mentality is only a physical property of the body. Thinking, for example, is only a neurological process in the brain.

Although part of Nietzsche's strategy is to debunk spirituality as metaphysical illusion, by reducing the spiritual and mental to the physical, his considered position is not materialist. He thinks that a human being is their life (or lives) and aspects of the life process may be thought of as mental, or physical, or neither. Nietzsche uses materialism as a philosophical weapon against mind-body dualism, theism, and other metaphysical theories but once it has been used he is happy to relinquish it. A similar pragmatic emphasis on the physical world, and denigration of metaphysical spirituality, can be found in Buddhism. In *The Diamond Sutra*, which recounts the former lives of the Buddha, Siddhartha Gotama himself says

'when my body was cut to pieces by the king of Kalinga, I had neither the idea of an ego, nor the idea of a person, nor the idea of a being, nor the idea of a soul' (ZNM 120/MZB 51)

Read one way, the Buddha is saying that in facing death he was facing the destruction of his body not the destruction of something mental or immaterial. In his previous incarnations the Buddha was not yet an enlightened being and so feared death. Presented with dismemberment by the king of Kalinga, what he feared in fearing his own destruction was the destruction of his body. The destruction of his body is necessary and sufficient for his own destruction. This view is based on the pragmatics of ordinary fear, not on metaphysical belief or *a priori* argument. Like Nietzsche, the Buddha is presenting the identification of oneself with one's body as the *realistic* view, the view one adopts in living practice rather than when doing metaphysics or theology. Not only were the ideas of ego, person, being, and soul not sufficient to dispel the immediate fear of death through dismemberment, these philosophical concepts were not even present to his mind. Read another way, the Buddha is saying that in his experience of dying he did not *encounter* ego, person, being, or soul. These concepts *do not denote anything* in the transition from life to death. In describing what it is to die, we should not have recourse to them because dying is the destruction of the body. On both interpretations, death is a test of metaphysics. In fearing death, our fear is for our body. In dying, it is the body that dies. Practically, I am not my ego. Practically, I am my body. Nietzsche says:

'An instrument of the body is also thy little sagacity, my brother, which thou callest "spirit"' (Z 36)

and

"Ego," sayest thou, and art proud of that word. But the greater thing - in which thou art unwilling to believe - is thy body with its big sagacity; it saith not "ego," but doeth it' (Z 36)

My ego is *my idea of myself*, not myself. It is that constellation of images and emotions which depicts me as the enduring psychological subject of my experiences. In fact, according to Nietzsche, my body is the subject of all my experiences including the idea of the ego. The existence of the body is a necessary condition for the existence of the ego but the existence of the ego is not a necessary condition for the existence of the body. The ego is something that is *done* by the body. The ego is an activity not a thing. What I take to be myself is in fact a psychological activity of my body. What I take to be my wisdom, or my ego's wisdom, is nothing. The body has a 'greater' wisdom in its instincts and desires. The thesis that the ego is not a thing but a kind of activity, or at least the trace of an activity, is also in Zen. Alan Watts says

'...the ego exists in an abstract sense alone, being an abstraction from memory, somewhat like the illusory circle of fire made by a whirling torch' (WZ 47)

If something is abstract then it has no real existence and no real causal efficacy. It is a theoretical or psychological by-product, perhaps as numbers are abstractions from counting, or mathematical points abstractions from the measuring of physical space. It is the result of thinking *as* a thing something that is *not* a thing. Of course, the circle of fire produced by a whirling torch does exist. There is a difference between such a circle being produced in the air and no such circle being produced. The point is that the circle is not real. This means it is not a self-sufficient entity that could exist without the conditions that produce it. Because it is an activity, or the trace of an activity, it is not a substance. Similarly, if I think about myself, the concretion of memories should not be mistaken for what I am. Nor should it be taken as something substantial, or self sufficient, which could exist without the activity of remembering.

Hinduism, and the philosophy of Vedanta which is its origin, includes a doctrine of *atman* or self, or soul. In Vedanta, the individual human soul is ultimately understood to be a part of the one universal or cosmic soul. It is the aim of the practical philosophy called *yoga* (or 'union') to bring about the spiritual fusion of the individual soul with the universal soul. (The English word 'yoke', denoting that which unites two oxen as a pair, is derived from the Sanskrit *yoga*). In this rather Neo-Platonist, or proto-Hegelian, philosophy the actual spiritual fusion is the same as the practitioner's *realisation* of this fusion. In later Hinduism, the individuality of the *atman* is retained in its immortality and the soul is not dissolved in the cosmic soul.

In its reaction against Vedanta and Hinduism, Buddhism, and therefore Zen, repudiates both the doctrine of the individual soul and the universal soul. It holds the opposite of the *atman* doctrine or '*anatman*, absence of any self' (WZ 46). Alan Watts describes the *anatman* doctrine as follows

'*anatman* might be expressed in the form, "The true Self is non-Self," since any attempt to conceive the Self, believe in the Self, or seek for the Self immediately thrusts it away' (WZ 47)

Two mutually inconsistent ideas need separating here. One is: *there is no self*, the other is: *there is a self but it is systematically elusive*. The claim that 'the true Self is non-Self' is the thesis that there is no psychic subject of one's own experiences, no inner source of one's own thoughts and experiences. If we can still properly talk of a true self, it is those experiences, or perhaps the series of psycho-physical events that constitutes a life. This is an ontological doctrine, a doctrine about what does or does not exist. It is not compatible with the view that there is an inner psychological self which cannot itself be the object of thought and experience. On this view, the self is that which thinks and so cannot be thought. It is that which experiences, and so cannot be experienced. It is that which believes, so cannot be believed in. It is itself the seeker and so cannot be found. The subjective self is, so to speak, so subjective that it cannot ever be properly construed as objective.

It might be thought that this doctrine of the elusive nature of the self embodies a logical fallacy. From the fact that the self is that which thinks and experiences it would seem not to follow as a matter of logic that it cannot itself be thought or experienced. In a way that is right. The inference is invalid. However, the point is that *as* object of thought the self is not the subject of thought and *as* object of experience the self is not subject of experience. Thinking of something is necessarily thinking of it as an object of thought. Experiencing something is necessarily experiencing it as an object of experience. This does not preclude also thinking of it, or experiencing it as a subject, but it does at least present a psychological obstacle to doing that. To draw an analogy, in seeing something, *the eye that sees does not see the eye that sees*. This is not due only to contingent anatomical facts about the location of the eyeball in the human body. It is also due to the fact that eyeballs are subjective, they are part of the subjective standpoint of the seer. This whole doctrine is not only ontological it is also epistemological. It is not only about what does or does not exist, it is also about what we can or cannot know. It implies we cannot know what we are, or, at least, we cannot know through ordinary methods of thinking or experiencing what we are.

It is the first of the two doctrines about the self that Watts needs. It is not part of Buddhism that there exists an inner, systematically elusive self. It is the Buddhist doctrine that there is no self. As Suzuki puts it:

'Muga, wu-wo, anutman, 'non-ego', selflessness' [...] is the central concept of Buddhism, both Hinayana and Mahayana' (ZNM 120)

Watts himself says

'It is fundamental to every school of Buddhism that there is no ego, no enduring entity which is the constant subject of our changing experiences' (WZ 47)

Sense and Spirit

It is common to Nietzsche and Zen that human beings are subject to two kinds of illusion, one empirical, the other metaphysical. Both are sources of suffering. Both are distractions from the living of life. The empirical illusion is our belief in the overwhelming reality of existence as it presents itself to us through the five senses (or, in Buddhism, six senses. The mind is a sense.) The metaphysical illusion is the belief in a spiritual world. Nietzsche says

'Sense and spirit would fain persuade thee that they are the end of all things: so vain are they' (Z 36)

According to our scientific, theological, commonsensical or philosophical persuasions we disagree about whether ultimate reality is spiritual or physical. The common mistake according to Nietzsche is to *assume that there is any such ultimate reality*. Nietzsche's philosophy is diagnostic, practical and prescriptive, rather than a world-picture. The transition from *Mensch* to *Übermensch* may be understood on the Buddhist model of a *way*, or *path*, or *dhamma*. Nietzsche cannot avoid making metaphysical assumptions, any more than Zen or any other putatively anti-metaphysical philosophy. Overtly however, Nietzsche and Zen eschew depictions of ultimate reality of the sort found in, for example, Plato, Leibniz or Spinoza or Hegel. Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists regard *the practice of living and dying* as a test of metaphysical philosophy. They tend to neglect the fact that any practical philosophy carries implicitly its own metaphysical assumptions.

We can understand the attack on the existence of spirit and the importance of the senses in Nietzsche and Zen as a critique of rationalism and empiricism in philosophy. Rationalism is the view that thinking is the best guide to reality (or, more technically, that there are synthetic *a priori* propositions which are metaphysical). Empiricism is the view that experience, paradigmatically sense experience, is the best guide to reality (or, more technically, there is no metaphysical synthetic *a priori* knowledge). Rationalism in itself does not entail the existence of a spiritual world but many rationalist philosophers have tried to establish the existence of a non-physical reality by *a priori* means: the Socratic soul, Platonic Forms, Cartesian minds, Leibnizian monads, the Hegelian *Geist*. Many empiricist philosophers have believed in God and the soul, Locke and Berkeley for example, but belief is insufficient for knowledge and they have usually argued that we cannot know any non-empirical facts unless we know some empirical facts. Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists are saying something inconsistent with both Rationalism and Empiricism: There is no ultimate reality to be known. It follows that there is no ultimate reality to be known through reason or the senses.

Nevertheless, Nietzsche does not avoid metaphysical commitments of his own. Here 'the Self' is an ironic name for the body

'Instruments and playthings are sense and spirit: behind them there is still the Self. The Self seeketh with the eyes of the senses, it harkeneth also with the ears of the spirit' (Z 36)

Rather like Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* Nietzsche depicts subjectivity as physical. The subject is that which thinks and experiences but the body *is* that which thinks and experiences, so the subject is the body. I am that which has my thoughts and experiences, but my body has my thoughts and experiences, so *I am* my body. If there is a semi-elusive self that is the perennial subject of my experiences, it is my body:

'Ever hearkeneth the Self, and seeketh; it compareth, mastereth, conquereth, and destroyeth. It ruleth, and is also the ego's ruler' (Z 36)

Nietzsche does not use the word 'brain' in the following passage, and it may plausibly be read as about the body as a whole. Nevertheless, if we note that the brain is not usually the direct object of its own experiences and so in that sense 'unknown', or hidden, then we may read Nietzsche as claiming that *the brain is the elusive self*:

'Behind thy thoughts and feelings, my brother, there is a mighty lord, an unknown sage - it is called Self; it dwelleth in thy body, it is thy body' (Z 36)

and

'Thy Self laugheth at thine ego, and its proud prancings' (Z 36)

The brain is in the body and the brain is part of the body and is arguably the best non-metaphysical candidate for the 'unknown sage'. Taken with his earlier claims, we may read Nietzsche as saying that I am not my ego, I am not my soul. I am my brain.

Pain and the Self

The essential aim of Buddhism is life without suffering. Buddhism recognises three sources of suffering: natural calamities, such as floods and earthquakes, the actions of other people, and the thoughts in one's own mind. Of these three, the last is overwhelmingly the greatest source of suffering. It is also the most eliminable. Its negative emotional power is intimately bound up with the sense of self.

The Buddhist term that is translated 'suffering', *dukkha*, has the sense not only of physical and emotional pain but also 'malaise' or 'dissatisfaction'. I suggest *dukkha* is most accurately rendered into a European language by the existentialist terms *Angst*,

angoisse or 'anxiety'. In the writings of the existentialist writers Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre 'anxiety' does not denote fluctuating unease empirical events, but an anxiety that pervades *life in the fact of death*. It is the feeling of not being fully 'at home' in the world, despite the fact that our existence is primordially and precisely, in the technical terminology of Heidegger and Sartre, *being-in-the-world*. This feeling of *estrangement from one's life*, this feeling that one's life is not all it could or should be, is common to both existentialism and Zen.

Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists maintain that suffering depends upon the sense of self or ego. A diminution in the sense of ego leads to a diminution in suffering. Nietzsche suggests that pain is *caused by* the body but *suffered by* the ego. Again 'the Self' denotes the body:

'The Self saith unto the ego: "Feel pain!" And thereupon it suffereth, and thinketh how it may put an end thereto - and for that very purpose it is meant to think' (Z 36-7)

The role of the ego in the experience of pain is crucial here. It is the ego that feels the pain that exists as a sensation in the body. The ego also makes the pain worse. We do not need to ascribe to Nietzsche the implausible view that the revelation of the ego as an illusion could eliminate that bodily sensation. However, if the ego is an illusion then the pain it feels is to the same degree also an illusion. In the experience of pain there is typically not only the bodily sensation but also uncomfortable psychological attention paid to that sensation and the desire for the pain to cease. There is the awkward thought that the pain is happening to me. Pain causes anxiety and, as Nietzsche says, in pain I think how my pain may be caused to cease. It is these uncomfortable psychological facts which would cease if the ego were unmasked as not real. A diminution in the sense of ego causes a diminution of pain.

It is essential to Nietzsche and Zen that there is no pain without pleasure and no pleasure without pain. Pain and pleasure arise in similar ways, so Nietzsche makes a parallel causal claim about pleasure:

'The Self saith unto the ego: "Feel pleasure!" Thereupon it rejoiceth, and thinketh how it may oftimes rejoice - and for that very purpose it is meant to think' (Z 37)

There is however a crucial asymmetry between the psychology of pain and the psychology of pleasure. The ego desires no repetition of pain but the ego desires repetition of pleasure. This desire for the repetition of pleasure is equivalent to part of the Buddhist doctrine of *karma*: *pleasure creates the desire for pleasure*. It is entailed by Zen, and consistent with what Nietzsche says, that this desire will in practice frequently be frustrated. It is one of the pervasive frustrations of the life of the *Mensch* and the unenlightened person to feel unfulfilled desires. It is not as though the plethora of desires of the *Übermensch* and the enlightened person are

miraculously fulfilled. Rather, desire arises and falls in these people without being *experienced as* desire. Desire does not touch them.

Nietzsche has expressed part of the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* here because in Buddhism *all* attachment to thought is karmic. Te-chan says:

'Cherish an iota of thought, and this will cause karma to work, which puts you on evil paths' (ZNM 129)

It is the cherishing rather than the thinking which creates the *karma*. It might seem strange that Te-chan speaks of cherishing thought, rather than the object of thought; what the thought is about. Normally we would think of someone desiring a cigarette, rather than desiring the thought of a cigarette, wishing for a sexual relationship with someone rather than wishing for the thought of that. It is clear in Zen, however, that we are attached to our thoughts, rather than to what our thoughts are about. To see the plausibility in this we have to consider the possibility that we are not emotionally attached to exactly what we think we are emotionally attached to. Suppose the putative object of our desire does not exist. In that case we are still emotionally attached to *something* but the only plausible candidate for this is something psychological; an image in the mind's eye perhaps. Even when the objects of desire exist physically, what we desire still might not be what we think we desire. For example, we might believe that we desire a sexual relationship with some specific person we are thinking of. In fact, we may be desiring our own sexual satisfaction and someone else would do. We might believe we desire a cigarette but, in fact, we might desire to feed our nicotine addiction and a nicotine patch will do.

As we have seen, it is common to both Nietzsche and Zen that we largely live out our lives in a mental construct. What we take to be the real world is projected by our hopes, fears and beliefs. In Zen, this psychological world and its illusory subject is constructed *by the process of living itself*. This is consistent with Nietzsche's process ontology and his repudiation of the psychic subject. Nietzsche often writes as though the mind is a construct of the body, something psychological that the body has *done*. For example, here 'the creating Self' refers to the body:

'The creating Self created for itself esteeming and despising, it created for itself joy and woe' (Z 37)

The body is the origin of emotion and value. Indeed, the body is the origin of metaphysical ideas of the self:

'The creating body created for itself spirit, as a hand to its will' (Z 37)

It follows that even when we identify ourselves with our minds, we are really responding to the desires or interests of the body:

'Even in your folly and despising ye each serve your Self, ye despisers of the body'
(Z 37)

As sometimes happens in Buddhism, here Nietzsche tacitly assumes the existence of what he is trying to deny. Who are we? On the ontology of these passages we are our bodies. But if each of us is his body, and each of us 'serves' his body, then it follows that each person's body serves itself. That is not incoherent, but it is not clear that Nietzsche realises it is an implication of his position. Nietzsche thinks death is a hidden teleology of the body:

'I tell you, your very very Self wanteth to die, and turneth away from life' (Z 37)

Although Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return implies that each person lives an infinite number of qualitatively identical lives, it does not have to be the case that *numerically* the same body exists across those distinct lifetimes for that qualitative identity to hold. A *qualitatively* identical body would do just as well, so long as personal identity across lifetimes does not depend upon the numerical identity of the body. If we insist that the same body has to exist in numerically distinct lifetimes, because for example, the passages identifying 'the Self' with the body seem to make the identity of the self depend upon the identity of the body then it is wholly obscure in Nietzsche how the same body may be the body of the same person in numerically distinct consecutive lifetimes. He just does not explain this. However, we may assume that although at death the atoms of a body are dissipated through the universe, they are at a later date recomposed to form the same body again. There are clear problems with this account. The human body constantly loses and gains atoms and it might be that at death no atom is numerically identical with any atom in the body at birth. However, there is such a thing as *all and only the atoms composing a human body in one lifetime*. It would have to be just *those* atoms which compose that body in the next lifetime. It might be thought that this is too strong a requirement on Nietzsche. Might not just a sufficient number of those atoms to ensure the numerical identity of the body across lives be sufficient? The problem is that Nietzsche not only thinks each life of one person is *exactly like* each other life of that person. He also thinks each later life *is a repetition of* the earliest life; that life. If just one atom was numerically different between the earlier life and the new lifetime, arguably the earlier life has not been repeated. Numerical identity of the atoms of a life over two lives ensures that it is *that* life that is repeated.

In Buddhism there are plenty of passages depicting the destruction of the body at death, for example when the Buddha recounts the dismemberment of his body in a former life by the king of Kalinga. In rebirth, if the person is reborn with a body it is a body numerically and qualitatively distinct from their previous body. It does seem logically possible on Buddhism for someone to be reborn either as numerically the same body or as some body numerically distinct from but qualitatively identical to one of their previous bodies. However, this does not happen because the karmic

effects of one's behaviour in one life alter subsequent lives including what one is reborn as. Such karmic effects are produced by thoughts and desires as much as by bodily actions. The Buddha says of the time he was dismembered by the king of Kalinga:

'if I had had the idea either of an ego, or of a person, or of a being, or a soul, the feeling of anger and ill-will would have been awakened in me.' (ZNM 120/MZB 51)

In being killed, the idea of oneself *as* someone dying (rather than the experience of one process ending) produces resentment, resentment that I am being killed. This resentment has adverse karmic consequences in future lives. The dependence of resentment on a sense of self is also emphasised by Nietzsche. When he says

'[...] ye can no longer create beyond yourselves.

And therefore are ye now angry with life and with the earth' (Z 37)

he means we do not conceive of ourselves as *freely creating ourselves*. We do not think we make ourselves what we are. We think of ourselves as fully formed agents with fixed natures. This inauthentic failure to realise our own freedom leads to a frustration with life and resentment. Nietzsche's cure for resentment is for us to freely make ourselves what we are:

"WILL A SELF." - Active, successful natures act, not according to the maxim, "Know thyself" but as if always confronted with the command, "Will a self, so you will become a self." - Fate seems always to have left them a choice' (HATH II 168)

'Inactive, contemplative natures, on the other hand, reflect on how they have chosen their self "once and for all" at their entry into life' (HATH II 168)

Free action is authentic action.

'Ah! my friends! That your very Self be in your action, as the mother is in the child: let that be your formula of virtue' (Z 112)

If Nietzsche discovered the unconscious more than half a century before Freud, Buddhism discovered it more than two millennia before Nietzsche. Nietzsche thinks we would be horrified if we understood the contents of our own minds:

'What would they perceive if they could see to the bottom of themselves!' (GS 220)

In his book *The Zen Doctrine of No Mind* Daisetz Suzuki raises the question

'What is *mushin* (*wu-hsin* in Chinese)? What is meant by 'no-mind-ness' or 'no-thought-ness'? It is difficult to find an English equivalent except the Unconscious' (ZNM 120)

but immediately adds

'It is not the unconscious in the usual psychological sense' (ZNM 120)

There are different senses of 'unconscious' in different psychologies. However, I shall take the 'usual' sense to be this: a person is in an unconscious mental state if *they are in that mental state but do not know they are in that mental state*. Paradigmatically, Freud thinks that there are unconscious drives and desires; drives and desires that we are internally subject to, but not aware of. This notion of an unconscious mental life is opposed to Descartes' theses that if I am in a mental state then I know I am in that mental state, and if I believe I am in a certain mental state then that belief cannot be mistaken.

Now, whatever the disaffinities Suzuki points to between this doctrine of the unconscious and *mushin* in Zen, it is clear that on both views there are mental states that are not the object of self-conscious acts of reflection. Alan Watts puts this well when he guards against an even cruder misunderstanding of the unconscious in Zen:

"'Unconsciousness' is not a coma, but what the exponents of Zen [...] signified by *wu-hsin*, literally "no-mind", which is to say un-selfconsciousness. It is a state of wholeness in which the mind functions freely and easily, without the sensation of a second mind or ego standing over it with a club' (WZ 23)

It might be better, then, to translate *mushin* or *wu-hsin* as 'unselfconsciousness' rather than 'unconscious'. It is living without the sceptic within. Despite the frequent insistence of many Zen Buddhists that Zen is 'nothing special', Suzuki says *mushin* is the same as

'the "abysmal ground" of the medieval mystics"' (ZNM 120)

and is what is denoted by

'the Divine Will even before its utterance of the Word' (ZNM 120)

in Judeo-Christian theism. If these remarks are to be taken seriously, then Suzuki is talking about a most profound spiritual and metaphysical transformation of the individual. How may this be reconciled with the view that Zen is ordinary? If this is possible, it is only by emphasising that this transformation is effected 'here and now': *The creative source of all experience is the timeless present. Mushin* is not 'behind the scenes'. It is not *too far from us* to be immediately apparent, it is *too near to us* to

be immediately apparent. We are always on the way to somewhere else. However, once the distractions of thought and desire are calmed by *za-zen*, *mushin* is disclosed as the ground of what is.

Nietzsche, of course, would not wish to endorse the theological or spiritual connotations Suzuki attributes to *mushin*, nor indeed would many Zen Buddhists. Nevertheless, Nietzsche thinks a profound enjoyment of life is possible once the ego is shown to be an illusion. He says of the majority, who are burdened with a sense of self

'They are signally dissatisfied with themselves' (GS 220)

When Nietzsche speaks of 'Belief in oneself' (GS 220) we must not misunderstand this to mean 'belief in a self'. My self is not myself. He means the kind of unreflective, unselfconscious confidence that is found in Zen; the sensation of being *at one with* the actions of one's life: *at-one-ment*.

In both Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen there is perceived to be a danger in the kind of progress through de-conditioning that they advocate. Nietzsche puts it this way:

'There arises in us the scent of a kind of pleasure hitherto unknown to us, and consequently a new craving' (DD 109)

Craving is an obstacle to the affirmation of life, the strong, confident and optimistic embracing of life. In Buddhism craving is the largest single obstacle to Enlightenment. The unconsciousness Alan Watts speaks of here is not *mushin*, rather it is the opposite of *mushin*: the lack of consciousness of how things are:

'the cause of frustration [...] is[...] *trishna*, clinging or grasping, based on *avidya*, which is ignorance or unconsciousness' (WZ 47-8)

and

'*avidya* is the formal opposite of awakening' (WZ 48)

Avidya can in fact be understood as *maya*. In order to understand more fully the Buddhist doctrine of unselfconsciousness, we need to analyse the concept of *wu-nien*. Suzuki reports that

'Hui-neng defines *wu-nien*, "To have thoughts as not having them"' (ZNM 126)

but then Suzuki asks

'would it be better to translate: "To have thoughts and yet not to have them"?' (ZNM 12)

On this point, Hui-neng's translation is more perspicuous than Suzuki's. Suzuki's translation entails a contradiction and so says nothing but Hui-neng's translation expresses an insight into the psychology of Zen. Hui-neng means *there are thoughts*: thoughts do arise in the mind. However, these thoughts are not 'had' by the individual in any stronger psychological sense. Psychological attitudes are not adopted towards them. For example, they are not presented to the mind as desires, as hopes, as fears, as beliefs. They are mental contents but they do not 'move' the thinker cognitively or emotionally. Perhaps because of this elimination of psychological attitudes we should give up talking of a thinker here. Suzuki reports Hui-neng as offering a second definition of *wu-nien*:

"Facing all environing objects the mind remains unstained" that is, no thoughts are raised in the mind' (ZNM 126)

This looks inconsistent with the first definition because that implies 'to have thoughts', but this definition implies 'no thoughts are raised in the mind'. Also, on the second but not the first definition it is denied that external objects cause thoughts. Another way of reading Hui-neng here is as drawing a distinction between two kinds of meditative state. In the first, less advanced state, *there are thoughts but no attitudes to thoughts*. This is *wu-nien* in the first sense. In the second, more advanced meditative state *there are no thoughts, just awareness*: no contents, just 'emptiness'. Suzuki reports Hui-neng as suggesting yet another understanding of *wu-nien*, as *no-thoughtness*:

'What is *wu-nien*, no-thought-ness? Seeing all things and yet to keep your mind free from stain and attachment, this is no-thought-ness' (ZNM 126)

On this view, in *wu-nien* there are no thought contents but there are experiential contents. The mind (if we may still speak of a mind here) is intellectually passive or non-judgemental. However, it still registers a phenomenology. In Kantian terms, the mind receives an intuitive sensory input but imposes no judgement, imposes no categories. (Kant, of course, thinks this separation impossible but if Hui-neng is right Kant is wrong). With metaphysical insight, Nietzsche says

'Everyone is furthest from himself' (GS 259)

This is consistent with the Zen thesis that our ordinary conditioned attitudes distract us from the reality of the present. Nietzsche describes phenomenological presence with existential accuracy:

'Around every being there is described a [...] concentric circle, which has a mid point and is peculiar to him' (D 117)

When Hui-neng speaks of self-nature he means *mushin*, what makes our psychologically constructed self possible:

'When Self-nature is recognised, this understanding at once leads one to the Buddha stage' (ZNM 127)

The Buddha stage is Enlightenment; unselfconsciousness, freedom from desire, freedom from rebirth, and freedom from suffering. It follows from both Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen that in a profound sense we do not know what we are. Nietzsche opens *The Genealogy of Morals* with

'We are unknown, we knowers, ourselves to ourselves' (GM 1)

Even though we are the knowers, human beings are the kinds of being who have knowledge, we do not know what we are. We have only a superficial kaleidoscope of impressions of our humanity. Does Nietzsche exaggerate when he says this is necessarily the case?

'Of necessity we remain strangers to ourselves' (GM 2)

If we are necessarily strangers to ourselves it is not just a contingent fact that we lack self-knowledge; self knowledge is systematically impossible for us. If this were true, the *Übermensch's* achievement of self-knowledge would be impossible, even on Nietzsche's own terms. There is however a more subtle reading of this. We cannot have self knowledge because *there is no self to know*. The truth about the self is that there is no self. Self knowledge does not consist in knowing the self but seeing through it. In the light of this we can understand Nietzsche's further remarks in *The Genealogy of Morals*:

'we understand ourselves not' (GM 2)

and

'in ourselves we are bound to be mistaken' (GM 2)

and

'as far as ourselves are concerned we are not "knowers"' (GM 2)

We do not understand ourselves because we do not understand our selves. We do not understand our selves because we have no selves to understand. We are bound to be mistaken in any claim about the self, because there is no self to make any such claim true (or false). This profoundly anti-Cartesian doctrine of 'no self', and the impossibility of self knowledge as knowledge of the self, is equivalent to the Zen doctrine of 'no mind'. Nevertheless, both Nietzsche and Hui-neng are prepared to acknowledge that personal pronouns have a referent. There are people, and people can know things about themselves. Indeed, once the metaphysical idea of a self, or ego, or psychic subject, is dropped, they claim, a new profound knowledge is facilitated: knowledge of what makes the psychologically constructed self possible. Nietzsche says

'He who looks into himself, as into an immense universe, and carries Milky Ways in himself, knows how irregular all Milky Ways are; they lead into the very chaos and labyrinth of existence' (GS 249)

and Hui-neng says:

'He who understands the idea of no-thought-ness has a perfect thoroughfare in the world of multiplicities. He who understands the world of no-thought-ness sees the realm of all the Buddhas; he who understands the idea of no-thought-ness attains to the stage of Buddhahood' (ZNM 126)

Nietzsche's 'immense universe' is Hui-neng's 'world of multiplicities'. Both Nietzsche and the Zen master are describing *experience without the ego*: experience without the background sensation of being a psychic individual living in cognitive confrontation with an 'external' world.

In this expanded state of consciousness there is no ego, or, if the sensation of ego appears it appears as one thought or sensation amongst others. Crucially, it is not felt to be me. Rather as Sartre describes in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, what was previously taken to be the subjective source of experience is now presented as another objective content. Nietzsche speaks of

' - the art of "putting ourselves on the stage" before ourselves. It is thus only that we get beyond some of the paltry details in ourselves!' (GS 110)

One's ego is presented as an object, and appropriately, as an actor on stage. Like Hume, whose ontology of the self is so similar to his own, Nietzsche compares the mind to a theatre. In both philosophies, however, it has to be *a theatre with no audience* but a theatre where acting nevertheless goes on. When the illusion of the ego is seen through, there is *freedom from* the ego and genuine *freedom of* thought and action. Suzuki says

'When your own mind is recognised, there is emancipation for you. When you have emancipation, this means that you are in the Samadhi of Prajna, which is *munen* (no-thought-ness)' (ZNM 127)

My own mind is not what I think it is. I think of it as an isolated ego in some sense attached to the body and essential to the individual who I am. The ego, or conventional mind, is a projection of *mushin*. If it makes sense for me to identify myself with anything at all, then it is with *mushin*. I am in a sense 'reduced' to *mushin* when in the state called *munen* which Suzuki translates as 'no-thoughtness'. There is awareness but no self awareness. Nietzsche thinks that without the mental capacity to be aware of the self as just one sensation amongst others we would grossly overestimate the cognitive role of our own subjective perspective on the world:

'Without that art we should be nothing but foreground, and would live absolutely under the spell of the perspective which makes the closest and the commonest immensely large and like reality in itself' (GS 110)

We would take what is presented to us through the senses as fundamentally real, but this is merely the existence that is most familiar to us.

So far, I have presented self-knowledge in Nietzsche's philosophy and in Zen as a result of the individual working on himself, in particular, *seeing through* the ego to the non-substantial nature of his own mind. The question arises now of the role of other people in self knowledge. Philosophers divide over whether other people are a help or a hindrance to self knowledge, essential or redundant. Hegel's so called 'Master and Slave Dialectic' in the 1807 work *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the *locus classicus* of the idea that self-knowledge is necessarily social, that one person's knowledge of their own mind depends upon an 'encounter' with another person. This idea may also be found in Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Peter Strawson and, in a linguistic variant, the private language argument of the later Wittgenstein. It is thoroughly opposed to Descartes's claim that any individual could, in principle, have knowledge of the nature and content of their own mind even if no other people existed. What are the views of Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists on this?

For Nietzsche, paradoxically, the encounter with another both facilitates and hinders self knowledge:

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'WHEREIN WE KNOW OURSELVES. - As soon as one animal sees another it mentally compares itself with it; and men of uncivilised ages did the same. The consequence is that almost all men come to know themselves only as regards their defensive and offensive faculties' (DD 225)

The reason one animal compares itself with another is to appraise its own fighting capacity *viz a vis* the other. This is the prehistoric reason why we are self-conscious

in the presence of others. Now, this is both a help and a hindrance to self knowledge. It is a help because it provides the prehistoric contingent necessary condition for our knowledge of our own existence and our knowledge of part of our own nature. It is a hindrance because the very condition that makes some limited knowledge possible constrains further knowledge. We only perceive in ourselves what it is biologically useful for us to perceive in ourselves.

It is perhaps in relation to other people that we despise ourselves or feel pride or self esteem. If I despise myself this may be for some immoral act, or act perceived as immoral by myself, or actual or possible others, but it might also be that I despise myself in relation to another. Nietzsche points to a paradox about despising:

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'He who despises himself, nevertheless esteems himself thereby, as a despiser' (BGE 87)

In despising myself I am both despiser and despised. As despised, I look down upon myself or regard myself with contempt. As despiser, I esteem myself or look up to myself as someone sufficiently noble or worthy to be a despiser. Although paradoxical, there is no inconsistency in this. As despiser I esteem myself. As despised I view myself with contempt. I can be doing both these things at exactly the same time. However complex and paradoxical the strategies of the self, Nietzsche thinks each of us makes a background Cartesian assumption about ourselves:

'In each cardinal problem there speaks an unchangeable "I am this"' (BGE 181)

I think of myself as the enduring subject of my life: as that which lives, thinks, acts, experiences. As we have seen, Nietzsche thinks this assumption is false. He puts the subject in question. Despite our Cartesian assumption, we fail to recognise its subjectivist epistemological consequences. We do not notice that what we take to be truths are 'our' truths:

'they are merely - my truths' (BGE 182)

From the fact that I believe something is true it does not follow that it is true. Indeed, it is an implication of the Nietzschean and the Zen view that we live in a psychologically constructed world, that many of our ordinary commonsensical beliefs are false. Of course, from the bare fact that we psychologically construct a world it does not follow that we have any false beliefs. It is because our constructed world is such a wildly inaccurate representation of the real world that that this entailment holds. For Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists, the escape from suffering requires not only the dispelling of illusion but also the end of self hatred:

'But he who wisheth to become light, and be a bird, must love himself: - thus do I teach' (Z 235)

'[...] that one may endure to be with oneself, and not go roving about' (Z 235)

Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists think that we are largely the author of our own misfortunes. Nietzsche draws a distinction between 'life' and 'man':

'[...] people say to us "Yea, life is hard to bear!"
But man himself only is hard to bear' (Z 236)

My life would be easier to bear if I did not cause my life to be hard to bear. Indeed, most suffering originates from within oneself:

'Many a thing [...] that is our own is hard to bear' (Z 236)

The right solution to this problem is not a spiritualist self renunciation. That only leads to metaphysical illusion:

'What does the self-renouncer do ? He strives after a higher world' (GS 69)

The right solution is the affirmation of life.

Do I Exist?

The question seems insane. Nevertheless, Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists seem to give sense to answering 'No' by insisting that there is no enduring or substantial self. This human being that you are is a mass of psycho-physical processes, or even a mass of fleeting sensations, and nothing more.

In meditation, it is certainly the case that there are sensations which arise and subside. It is possible to reach a stillness when there is no awareness of oneself as *this human being*. There is only the arising and subsiding of sensations, or the coming or going of thoughts. It is possible to reach a further point, if 'reach' and 'point' may be used, when sensations and thoughts cease and there is only alert emptiness. The world and thoughts about it have gone. You as this human being have gone. You as this concretion of emotion-saturated impressionistic self-image have gone.

Zen monks will not do metaphysics. Nevertheless, it is possible to ask about the metaphysical significance of emptiness. To do this, we need to understand two philosophical problems.

The first problem is about the transcendence of the self. Suppose you are sitting meditating, and across the room from you a Zen monk is sitting meditating. In both your case and in the case of the Zen monk, there is a stillness. Thoughts and

sensations arise and subside, but eventually cease. In both your case and the Zen monk's, there is a loss of awareness of the body and a dissolving of the ego. You are both transformed into states of emptiness or pure expanded alert awareness. I fully accept this is possible and that this happens. This is how it is. Now, the metaphysical problem is this: *There are two of these zones of emptiness not one. The Zen monk's alert emptiness is not your alert emptiness.* Why? Of course, 'Zen monk' and 'your' are, in any empirical sense, inappropriate at this level. Conditioned reality has dissolved. Nevertheless, in philosophical terminology, the two zones of emptiness are numerically distinct: This one is not that one and that one is not this one. I suggest, that although the body and the mind have dissolved the self has not dissolved. In fact, it has been revealed or disclosed as a zone of no-thing-ness which is primordial to both body and mind.

One reason for saying this is: The emptiness of the Zen monk is not accessible from your emptiness. Even though the Zen monk and you as a human being have dissolved, this emptiness is not accessible from that emptiness. Indeed, any emptiness only knows its own interiority. *You are an absolute interiority.*

The other problem is this. If we return to the ordinary, empirical, ways of thinking for the moment, you view the world from the human being you 'are'. Other people are presented to you as 'over there', as living, breathing, expressive, but as objects in your visual and other sensory fields. There is, then an asymmetry between *being* one of these human beings, the one that one 'is', and not being any of those (billions of) other people. Just one person is odd: It has the feature of *being you* (if it is right to speak of a feature here). The metaphysical question is Why? Why should one of these human beings be you?

Now, Nietzsche, brilliant philosopher as he is, and Zen Buddhism, valuable source of wisdom and insight as it is, *have not noticed this problem.* (They are by no means alone in this. The scientific thinking of the West today does not have the categories to pose it.) This question only admits of a metaphysical, indeed, a theological answer. I suggest: *The emptiness of the Buddhists is the interiority of the soul.* From the point of view of theology, Buddhism is then a philosophy of extreme importance. Buddhism can put you in touch with your own soul. Of course, many Buddhists do not know or do not realise that that is what they are in touch with. Christianity, correctly understood, entails the existence of the soul. Unfortunately, the rise of scientific secularism has caused a decline in spiritual exercises and spiritual contemplation revelatory of the relation of one's soul to God. This ancient spirituality should be recovered.

It might well be wondered: How is the existence of the soul supposed to solve the philosophical problem about the self? It might be asked whether the existence of the soul is necessary or sufficient for some existence being one's own. Well, there is much greater room for doubt that one's body or one's mind is one's own. Because the soul is an absolute interiority, it is what remains of you once the empirical has dissolved. You have not dealt with anything other than yourself in the whole meditative process.

REBIRTH AND RECURRENCE

In the chapter on suffering and death I argued that both the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth and Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return admit of a literal and a figurative interpretation. From now on I construe these two doctrines only literally. I read them as claims about life after death and life before birth, and try to make metaphysical sense of them.

The Eternal Sandglass

There is a logical asymmetry between the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth and Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return. Although on both philosophies I have a first life, in Zen but not in Nietzsche I have a last life. Zen Buddhists believe that the series of lives is eventually halted in *Satori*. Nietzsche thinks that any life is followed by an infinite number of lives.

The title of Nietzsche's book, *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, is sometimes translated *The Gay Science*, sometimes *The Joyful Wisdom*. *The Gay Science* comes closest to a literal translation of the Italian *La Gaya Scienza*. The German bears translation as *Happy Wisdom*, where this means something like *knowledge of how to be happy*. As we saw in Chapter 1, Buddhism is essentially a way of life designed to avoid suffering and find genuine happiness. We may read *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* as denoting knowledge of exactly that. It is not false, but slightly misleading, to say that Zen is *knowledge*. 'Knowledge' is too intellectual, too propositional, in its connotations. Zen is *wisdom*. It contains *knowledge of how to live* rather than knowledge of facts. Having information is not sufficient for being a Buddhist. It is necessary to live in a different way. In this sense it is also appropriate to name Buddhism 'Happy Wisdom'.

Nevertheless both Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen contain putative metaphysical knowledge. *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* contains one of Nietzsche's most detailed and categorical descriptions of the eternal return:

'This life, as thou livest it at present, and hast lived it, thou must live it once more, and also innumerable times; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh, and all the unspeakably small and great in thy life must come to thee again, and all in the same series and sequence - and similarly this spider and this moonlight among the trees, and similarly this moment and I myself [the demon] . The eternal sandglass of existence will ever be turned once more, and thou with it, thou speck of dust' (GS 270-1)

What does this mean? Could it be true? *This life* is either the *first* life that the reader lives, or *any* life that the reader lives. (What makes a life *this* life?) If *this life* is my first life, then there is some point in the eternal return coming as news. How I live my first life will dictate exactly how all my future lives will be lived because they will be qualitatively identical to my first life. In my first life, I have a partial freedom to live as I wish, notably, to be weak or strong, conditioned and morally obsequious or free and morally inventive. In every subsequent life this freedom is absent. If *this life* is *any* life I live, then although the doctrine of eternal return could still be true, there is little point in its coming as news. (Of course it *does* come as news, in every life of mine, because it came as news in the first life and every subsequent life is qualitatively identical with the first.) There is no point in its coming as news in any life after the first because in any of those I have lost the freedom *to act on knowledge* of the eternal return. I cannot, for example, be inspired to live my life in a life affirming way. That chance only comes once; at the beginning of the infinite sequence of lives.

Any life I live will be followed by an infinite number of lives. Of any two lives, one is later than the other but any later life is followed by a fewer number of lives than any earlier life. This is true *even though any life is followed by an infinite number of lives*. (There is no incoherence in this. Consider the fact that the number of even numbers is fewer than the number of numbers even though both numbers of numbers are infinite in size). Any later life is followed by an infinite number of lives *minus the number of lives that have preceded it*. That still leaves an infinite number of lives, but a smaller infinite number of lives.

Nietzsche also says *this moment* will be repeated an infinite number of times. This claim is ambiguous between a sense in which it is false and a sense in which it could be true. *This moment* can mean *this very moment*, in the sense of *this particular one*, or it can mean *exactly this type of moment*. This very moment cannot be repeated because any particular moment is a one-off. We should not read Nietzsche's *this moment* in that way because it is inconsistent with the doctrine of eternal return. Impossibly, a moment in a later life would be numerically identical with a moment in an earlier life but that is incoherent, so false. If we read *this moment* to mean *exactly this type of moment* then Nietzsche's claim is logically consistent: Exactly this type of moment will be repeated. Any subsequent life will include a moment that is *numerically distinct from*, but *qualitatively identical to*, a moment in the first life. This is the sense in which *this moment* can be repeated. Nietzsche claims that 'the eternal sandglass of existence will ever be turned once more'. Unpacking the metaphor, the sandglass of existence is time. If *existence* means my existence in one life, then one complete movement of the sand from one part of the sandglass to the other is the time it takes for one life of mine to elapse. The sandglass *will ever be turned* because each life of mine is immediately followed by another. It is *turned once more* because every life except the first life was immediately preceded by a life. This may also be read as a claim about events, or the

times at which they happen. Either way, some of the considerations about *this moment* apply. For example, to say that *an event* of my first life will be infinitely repeated is in a sense false (because particular or token events are one-offs) and in a sense logically possible (because there could in principle obtain an infinite number of numerically distinct events of exactly the same type).

Douglas Burns uses a famous Buddhist metaphor for rebirth:

'Rebirth is the continuation of a process rather than the transfer of a substance. If we light a match and with the match light a candle, the process of combustion in the match is carried over to the candle. Is the flame in the candle the same flame or a different one than the one in the match? We can say both yes it is or no it is not. Likewise the Buddha said that when one dies it is not quite correct to say that the same person will live again, nor is it correct to say that he will not live again. The truth lies between these two extremes' (WD 45)

In Buddhist philosophy, a person is not a substance but a process. 'Substance' can be understood in two senses. Something is a substance if *it depends upon nothing else for its existence* or if *it is that which bears properties, or characteristics*. For example, physical objects and souls might be substances in both senses because arguably they could exist even if there was nothing else, and they are not properties but bearers of properties. If so, the Buddhist rejection of the thesis that people are substances entails that people are not physical objects or souls. A process is a sequence of events. Not *any* sequence of events is a process, but if some events are *the parts of a non-arbitrary whole sequence* then the sequence is a process. For example, if some events are causally connected, or immediately juxtaposed in the sequence, or can be meaningfully specified as some whole, then they form a process. The Buddhist view that a person is a process entails that a person is a sequence of events. As we saw in Chapters 1 and 2, this is the Zen view.

If we take the view that a person is a substance then there is no acute problem about what the identity of a person over time consists in. The person lasts as long as the substance lasts. To say that a person at a later time is numerically identical with a person at an earlier time is to say that the substance that is the later person is the substance that is the earlier person. Life after death is easier to make sense of if a person is a substance. When life ends the substance persists. If the substance is a physical object, we have to assume that its dissipation into parts is temporary and that the substance will be reconstituted at a later date. (To still talk of a substance here we have to assume that the existence of a substance's parts is sufficient for its existence). If the substance is a soul, we have to assume that when a life ends, and the body is dissipated, the soul continues essentially unaffected. As Kierkegaard says, following St. Paul: perhaps surprisingly, *we remain*. Nietzsche and Zen cannot avail themselves of this account of personal identity and life after death. If a person is a process, then a later person is numerically identical with an earlier person if both persons are parts of the same process. For this to be plausible, some explanation is

needed of what makes a later part of a process part of the same process as an earlier part. Buddhism, especially Zen is very weak on this point. Because Zen Buddhists are not primarily concerned to do metaphysics, they provide no explicit account of what the identity of a process over time consists in. In particular they provide no account of the unity of one life process over time, even though they think a person *is* their life process. Derek Parfit has suggested the quasi-Buddhist view that there is *continuity without identity*. Without recourse to body or soul, or anything outside the process, the unity of the process has to be accounted for from within the process itself. It is the way in which the events of a life are internally related that makes them parts of one and the same life. 'Internally related' is the name of complex and detailed *karmic* imprints. For example *that* action is the result of *that* intention. The thought about *that* was caused by the wish to do *that* and so on for innumerable psychological and psycho-physical events. A Nietzschean account of the unity of a life in terms of internal relations that include causal relations is consistent with the Buddhist doctrine of Karma. A person *is* their lives in Zen. There is not anybody that lives these lives. In particular, the body and the soul do not live any life. A person is a psycho-physical constellation of life processes.

What makes a life that begins at a person's death the continuation of *their* life process? It will not do just to say that someone is born at the moment that someone dies. Although necessary for the continuation (but not resumption) of a life process, it is not sufficient because someone could be born at the moment of my death who is not me, or not continuous with me. In principle, any number of people could be born at the moment of my death but, it seems, I can be identical with at most one of them. An answer to the question *What makes the new life mine?* is implicit in the Buddha's remarks about memory. In *The Diamond Sutra*, the Buddha recollects his previous lives. That I can remember a life is neither necessary nor sufficient for that life's being mine. However, suppose I can veridically remember *what it was like* to live that life. Plausibly, I can only do that if that life was my life. I can only rightly remember *my own* life *from the inside*.

This provides us with a sufficient condition for some earlier life being one of mine. (It is not necessary because I might not be able to remember my past lives. Indeed, without training in *za-zen*, or something psychologically or metaphysically similar, it is unlikely that one would.) It is part of Buddhism that most people most of the time do not remember their previous lives, although they are subject to Karmic influence by them. There is another problem. The English eighteenth-century philosopher Bishop Butler suggested that memory *presupposes* personal identity, so cannot be what personal identity *consists in*. It is because *I am* the earlier person that I can *remember being* the earlier person, rather than *vice versa*. If any life of mine is subject to karmic influences *only* from that life, or my previous lives, then we do have a criterion which uniquely identifies a present and some past lives as mine. My life is *karmically continuous* with my previous lives. It bears their *karmic imprint*.

So far, I have treated the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth as entailing that a person survives their bodily death. The process that a person is *continues* in a new life.

However, the position is not nearly so straightforward. Douglas Burns raises the question of whether, if we light a candle using a match, the flame of the candle *is* the flame of the match. He says 'We can say both yes it is or no it is not'. Suppose Burns is not just mentioning two mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive possibilities: *It is the same flame or it is not the same flame*. Suppose he is saying that the truth is: *It is and it is not the same flame*. This looks impossible, because something cannot be unambiguously both the case and not the case. We need a sense in which *it is the same flame* and a sense in which *it is not the same flame*. The sense in which it is *not* the same flame is this. The flame that is burning on the match, while it is burning on the match, is not the flame burning on the candle while it is burning on the candle. The flame while burning on the candle is not the flame burning on the match while it is burning on the match. In a similar way, no later life of mine is any earlier life of mine. The sense in which it *is* the same flame is this. *Just one flame is transferred* from the match to the candle. The flame is uninterrupted in its burning and there is no second flame involved. Similarly, my life process *continues* at my death. Parfit thinks there is continuity without identity. From a Zen point of view it is a matter of stipulation whether continuity is sufficient for identity. Parfit and Zen agree that continuity and not identity is *what is important*. (J. L. Austin, when asked what the importance of his work is, is supposed to have replied: 'Importance is not important. Truth is.') Burns says the Buddha says it is not quite correct to say that the same person will live again after death, nor is this incorrect. What the Buddha says in fact is

'To say he is not reborn does not fit the case, nor is it any better to say he is both reborn and not reborn, or that he is neither reborn nor not reborn' (WD 58)

This, in fact, only leaves one logical permutation: *He is reborn*. It leaves only clear rebirth. Consider:

- (1) *He is reborn.*
- (2) *He is not reborn.*
- (3) *He is both reborn and not reborn.*
- (4) *He is neither reborn nor not reborn.*

The Buddha has ruled out (2), (3) and (4) but has not said anything here about (1). (1) is theoretically possible. (2) is theoretically possible. (3), if unambiguous, is logically impossible because contradictory. (4), if unambiguous, is logically impossible because inconsistent with 'He is reborn' being either true or false, so inconsistent with the law of excluded middle. If we say excluded middle does not apply here and give up the assumption that 'He is reborn' is either true or false then

(4) implies the concept of an individual being reborn *has no application* here. Nevertheless, the Buddha overtly repudiates the substantial view of personal identity across lives. He says

'Nothing passes from life to life, but decease and rebirth take place nevertheless' (WD 56)

There is nothing within any life of mine that is numerically identical with anything in any earlier or later life. Indeed, it is metaphysically misleading to use first person singular pronouns here, because that suggests that there is a psychological self who exists in each of my lives. Lama Govinda says:

'there is no one who is reborn' (WD 49)

even though there is rebirth. Nietzsche's Zarathustra says to the dwarf:

"Look at this gateway! Dwarf!" I continued, "it hath two faces. Two roads come together here: these hath no one yet gone to the end of.

This long lane backwards: it continueth for an eternity. And that long lane forward - that is another eternity.

They are antithetical to one another, these roads; they directly abut on one another: - and it is here, at this gateway, that they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed above: 'This Moment'" (Z 190)

Nietzsche provides no *causal explanation* of the eternal return. He presents it as a brute metaphysical fact. Zen does provide a causal explanation of rebirth, in terms of *karma*. Roshi Yasutani says

'We are reborn when our karmic relations impel us to be reborn. We die when our karmic relations decree that we die. And we are killed when our karmic relations lead us to be killed' (WD 8)

My *karma* is the effect of my present thought and action on both what I will *do* what *happens to* me. It is empirically obvious that something like this goes on. If I drink excessively, I suffer a hangover. If I eat excessively, I become overweight. If I smoke, I run the risk of bronchial diseases. If I am unpleasant to my family and colleagues, I can expect them to be unpleasant back. If I leave important tasks uncompleted, I may expect to worry about them at a later date. In many respects I am the author of my own fortune or misfortune. Buddhism takes this fact most seriously. *Everything* I think and do has some future *karmic* effect on my life. *Karmic* effects accumulated in one life carry over into the next, or even some life long after that one. Some dreadful deed, such as a murder, might require many lifetimes for its adverse *karmic* effects to be expunged. It is necessary to do good deeds to erase the effects of

karma and future lives exist *so that* such bad *karma* may be erased. It is no exaggeration to say that rebirth exists because of an ethical imperative for rebirth to exist. Of course, in general we do not think that because something ought to be the case that it will be the case. It is fallacious to argue that something will happen because it ought, or because it facilitates goodness. It is not possible to derive a *shall* from an *ought*, we might say. (The fallacy is embodied in Kant's 'moral' argument that because we are morally incomplete or imperfect in our earthly existence, there must exist an afterlife in which moral perfection is possible.) However, deductive validity is too strong a requirement here. We are used to the idea that something will happen because it ought to happen. For example, someone might do something because he thinks it ought to be done. If we assume that any thought or action of mine has some effect on me, and if there is not time in one lifetime for such effects to be operative, then there must be subsequent lifetimes in which such effects are operative. If that is right, then my present thoughts and actions cause my rebirth. That is in fact the Buddhist view.

We should now locate the ideas of rebirth and eternal return in the Nietzschean and Buddhist ideas of eternity and repetition. Not only does Nietzsche think that every event in a person's life is repeated an infinite number of times in future lives, he thinks every event of every kind is infinitely repeated. For example he says

'Everything goeth, eveything returneth; eternally rolleth the wheel of existence. Everything dieth, everything blossometh forth again: eternally runneth on the year of existence' (Z 266)

The image of existence as a rolling wheel captures two tenets essential to Nietzschean metaphysics. The motion of a wheel suggests *repetition*. For example, when a wheel rolls on the ground each part of the rim of the wheel is repeatedly in contact with the ground. Similarly, each kind of event repeatedly exists and ceases to exist. The idea of the wheel being in motion also expresses the view that *being is becoming*. What we think of as being, or existence, is in fact incessantly beginning to be and ceasing to be. As he puts it 'every moment beginneth existence'. (Z 266) Choose any time interval, no matter how small, there is both beginning to be and ceasing to be at that time. This what Nietzsche calls 'becoming'. (Z 270) The process of spontaneous creation and destruction is endless. When Nietzsche says *the year of existence* is eternal he means there will never be a time when the process of becoming will cease.

Because there is no divine creator, in Nietzsche's view, it is the process of becoming that itself creates and destroys its own component events. In this passage, *existence* means *what is* or *what happens*:

'Everything breaketh, everything is integrated anew; eternally buildeth itself the same house of existence. All things separate, all things again greet one another; eternally true to itself remaineth the ring of existence' (Z 266)

The only fundamental metaphysical fact that does not change is the fact of becoming itself. The 'ring' of existence remains true to itself because the cycle of repetitions never stops and remains uniform. If everything happens an infinite number of times, two questions arise: What are the units of repetition? and Has everything *already* happened an infinite number of times? By a 'unit' of repetition I mean whatever it is that bounds a sequence of numerically (and largely qualitatively) distinct events as one whole repetition. We need to know the conditions under which one cycle ends and another begins. In Hinduism and in physics whole universes go out of existence and come into existence even though, on those two systems, it is not held that distinct universes are qualitatively identical. Nietzsche thinks the unit of repetition is a human life:

'all things eternally return, and ourselves with them, and [...] we have already existed times without number, and all things with us' (Z 270)

This is a crucial statement. It seems to follow from it that Nietzsche is a kind of idealist after all. There is nothing in his writing to suggest that he has noticed this about himself, but in his own peculiar way, Nietzsche looks as much a German idealist as Kant and Hegel, Fichte and Schelling. He is not a straightforward psychological idealist. He does not think physical events are mental events. He is what we could call a *humanistic idealist*. He is logically committed to the view that *reality is essentially human reality*. This is not just an epistemological position. It is not just the rather tautological thought that the only reality humans can know is known by human means. It is a metaphysical position. If the processes of the universe repeat themselves when and only when there are human life-times then, in a clear sense, the universe depends upon humanity. This is Nietzsche's humanistic idealism. In the passage from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, he uses the expression *and all things with us*. He did not write a sentence ending *and us with all things*. The dependence holds in the direction: *the universe on humanity*, not humanity on the universe. In a human birth and a human death Nietzsche has given us a clear criterion for when one cycle of events ends and another begins. He has given us no other criterion, including no objective or non-humanist criterion. One is left wondering, What is so special about us? Why should human beings be invested with such cosmic significance?

This humanistic implication of the doctrine of eternal return gives rise to a severe problem. Human lifetimes overlap. Few human births are simultaneous and few human deaths are simultaneous. It is therefore not possible for the cycles of repetition in the whole universe to obtain in a one-one mapping on human life-times. If there are human lifetimes, then this only becomes possible if we give up the

assumption that there is only one universe, just *one* sequence of cycles. There have to be as many 'universes' as there are people. This is a conclusion that would have appalled Nietzsche but it is a logical implication of his work. It makes him not only a humanistic idealist but a humanistic solipsist.

In the same passage he claims *we have already existed times without number*. This implies that the infinite sequence of human lifetimes is open at both ends. Not only will I live an infinite number of times after my present life, I have lived an infinite number of times before. Nietzsche has said something inconsistent with his important claim that anyone lives for a first time. Clearly, it is logically impossible for me to both live a first life and to have lived an infinite number of previous lives because it is contradictory to imply that any series has both a first member and no first member. It is not a viable solution to suggest that we read this passage as only about subsequent lives and not about a first life. If it is true that *any* life in the series has an infinite number of predecessors it is false that there is a first life. Nietzsche has made a mistake because he does not know enough about the logic of infinity. It is best forgotten.

Buddhahood and Time

Roshi Yasutani says:

'If we do not change, we are lifeless' (WD 8)

There are other notions of eternity in Nietzsche which are benign, not necessarily inconsistent with his considered view, for example in this question;

"And if everything hath already existed, what thinkest thou, dwarf, of This Moment? Must not this gateway also - have already existed?" (Z 191)

We do not have to read this to mean that an infinite number of moments *like* this moment have existed, although it can mean that. We can take Nietzsche literally, as saying that *the present has always existed*: there is (timelessly) not any time that is not a present time. We could also take *everything hath already existed* not to mean *every kind of event has already happened* but to mean; everything, the totality of what is whatever is, has never not been.

We should turn now to the psychological responses to the eternal return in Nietzsche's philosophy and rebirth in Zen. In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, when Zarathustra entertains the idea of the eternal return, he confesses

Z: 'I was afraid of mine own thoughts' (Z 191)

He feels the awesome responsibility of living his life authentically in the knowledge of its infinite repetition. In *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche considers two possible responses to the doctrine of eternal return coming as news:

'Wouldst thou not throw thyself down and gnash thy teeth, and curse the demon that so spake?' (GS 271) 341

Or, say:

"'Thou art a God, and never did I hear aught more divine!' (GS 271)

The same metaphysical information could provoke either the most pessimistic despair or a spiritual delight. The eternal return presents us with a stark existentialist choice. On the face of it we have to choose our own values. Fundamentally, we have to choose whether to affirm life or deny it. Nietzsche urges affirmation. In the idiom of Nietzsche's ironic atheism, the eternal return is '*circulus vitiosus deus*' (BGE 74) 56 a virtuous circle of God. The eternal return is Nietzsche's metaphysical substitute for theology.

Lama Govinda says:

'Rebirth in heavenly realms [...] is not an aim which Buddhists think worth striving for' (WD 50-1)

To live in the knowledge of the truth of eternal return requires a special kind of human, an *Übermensch*. Someone who is a transformation of the human condition. The eternal return forces the choice between *Mensch* and *Übermensch*:

'If that thought acquired power over thee, as thou art, it would transform thee and perhaps crush thee' (GS 271)

The *Übermensch* has the strength of character, the bravery, to welcome the eternal return; to embrace it. The *Übermensch* answers 'Yes' to this:

'the question with regard to all and everything: "Dost thou want this once more, and also for innumerable times?" (GS 271)

Indeed, the *Übermensch* is happy in the knowledge of the eternal return, not because of any metaphysical consolation for death, not because of immortality, but because of this chance to live freely and authentically. It is the *hidden teleology* of *Mensch* to aspire to be *Übermensch*:

'to become favourably inclined to thyself and to life, so as to long for nothing more ardently than for this last eternal sanctioning and sealing[?]-' (GS 271)

The *Übermensch* is favourably inclined to himself when he accepts the eternal return. Similarly, in Zen, when rebirth is understood and accepted as a reality, this brings great inner peace. Roshi Yasutani says

'We die because we are alive. Living means birth and death. Creation and destruction signify life.

When you truly understand this fundamental principle, you will not be anxious about your life or your death. You will then attain a steadfast mind and be happy in your daily life' (WD 8)

In Nietzsche and in Buddhism, birth is not really birth and death is not really death. The only real, or absolute, birth and death in these philosophies are the first birth in both and the last death in Buddhism. Birth and death are mutually dependent and death need be no more a cause for anxiety than birth. True, some Zen passages make it *sound as though* rebirth is a metaphysical consolation. For example, Roshi Yasutani says:

'Having once perceived the world of Buddha-nature, we are indifferent to death, since we know we will be reborn' (WD 8)

Death is defused by rebirth but this should not be emphasised too strongly. Rebirth is not itself desirable. This is partly because desiring rebirth is yet another form of attachment, and so an obstacle to Enlightenment, but also because rebirth is in a sense bad. Rebirth exists because bad *karma* exists and it is the ultimate aim of Buddhism to end the cycles of rebirth in *nirvana* or, to use the Japanese Zen Buddhist term, *Satori*. 'Ultimate aim' has to be used with caution here because *Satori* is a disclosure of the present. It does not take place in a future which metaphysically contrasts with the present. It is a profound realisation of the eternity of the present. It is the existential appreciation that it is never not the present. This fact is not just thought, or intellectually entertained, it is lived. Life is lived 'to the full' in the present.

Nietzsche's *Übermensch* lives *in* eternity not *to* eternity;

'I love thee, O Eternity!' (Z 280)

The eternity of the *Übermensch* is the eternity of the present, the fact that it is never not now:

'the ideal of the most world-approving and vivacious man, who has not only learnt to compromise and arrange with that which was and is, but wishes to have it again as it was and is, for all eternity' (BGE 74)56

One of the most salient asymmetries between Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return and the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth is that in Nietzsche's view every life a person leads is the same, and on the Buddhist view every life a person lives is different. Nevertheless, Nietzsche suggests:

'[...] if one were to imagine a man of eighty thousand years, one would have in him an absolutely unchangeable character, so that a number of different individuals would gradually develop out of him' (HATH 62)

If one life were much longer than it is, then a person at a late stage of this life would be so qualitatively different from that person as an earlier stage that it hardly makes sense to speak of *the same person* here. Although numerical identity over time is maintained even in a very long life, conceptual room is made for us to speak of *this human being* as different individuals, or personalities. We are familiar with the psychological phenomenon of split personality and multiple personalities; where numerically and qualitatively distinct psychologies seem to be associated with just one human being. We have to imagine something like this in the case of the person who lives for eighty thousand years, except the personalities or 'individuals' exist consecutively, not simultaneously, in one and the same body. Nietzsche says such a person would have an absolutely unchangeable character. The impossibility here cannot be logical because there is no incoherence in the supposition that someone who lived for an extraordinarily long time should change their character radically near the end of their life. Nietzsche is suggesting perhaps, that such a person would have exhausted the *possibilities* for character change. He anticipates the existentialist thesis that once a life is over we may speak of a character as fixed, but not before then. It follows that the number and kinds of personalities a person has are contingently constrained by facts about human longevity. In so far as I am free, in so far as I escape the conditioned morality of the 'herd', I determine my own character. This freedom, however, does not exist in my future lives. My future lives are wholly determined by the events of my first life, including what I choose in that life.

In Buddhism, future lives are determined, but not wholly determined by what I choose in earlier lives. For example, the Buddha says

'the first thought on rebirth arises from two causes - the last thought of the previous life as its governing principle, and the actions of the previous life as its basis. Thus a man is reborn in the purgatories, or as an animal, a spirit, a demon, a human being, or a god' (WD 56)

It is misleading to call rebirth 'reincarnation' not only because it suggests I could in principle exist as something non-physical, but because in Buddhism nothing is reincarnated. In particular, the Buddhists think no soul is conjoined with any body. Nietzsche allows the use of the word 'soul' but not in any Platonic, metaphysical or Christian sense. He says

'Souls are as mortal as bodies' (Z 270)

Nietzsche and the Buddhists *rethink* life after death without recourse to the idea of soul. What am I? The Zen response to this question is that *there is no one* who is born and no one who has the trouble of existing now. There are births. Lives do begin. There is the trouble of existing now and it is the point of Zen to end this trouble, but there is no enduring subject of experience who is born and who suffers now. When Sri Ramana Maharshi says :

'That which is born must die'.

he asks straight away

Whose is the birth? Were you born?' (WD 57)

That which is born must die, because the process that is a single life not only begins but ends. In a sense a birth was mine. I was born. A particular birth was the beginning of the current life process that I am. In another sense it is false that I was born. The psychological self that I (mistakenly) identify myself with did not undergo that birth. It did not exist at the time of 'my' birth.

Some Zen passages are strongly deterministic. For example, Roshi Yasutani says:

'We are the manifestation of our karmic relations at any given moment, and upon their modification we change accordingly. What we call life is no more than a procession of transformations' (WD 8)

However, even Yasutani does not say we are *only* the manifestation of our *karmic* relations. Conceptual room is left for the possibility of action in any life. Indeed, it is this residual freedom that makes possible the gradual erasure of the the consequences of bad *karma* and its gradual replacement by good *karma*. Some doctrines of free will and determinism rest on the presupposition that there is an enduring or substantial being who is the subject and object of change: an agent who *really acts* on the free will doctrine, a being who is *subject to causal influence* on the deterministic doctrine. Buddhism, including Zen, calls this common presupposition into question. In so far as there is no agent there is no free agent, in so far as there is no subject there is no determined subject. The Buddha says

'In the whole process no one acts and no one experiences the results of action, except by verbal convention' (WD 56)

Rather like Kant, Wittgenstein, Gilbert Ryle, and others, the Buddha thinks we are misled by language into thinking there is an enduring or substantial subject of

change: a self or agent. Because natural languages such as Pali and Sanskrit contain personal pronouns, and nouns used to denote the psychological, we miss the point that we are processes, not entities. The use of language has a causal role in rebirth. Language presupposes dialectically opposed concepts. Unless we are able to free ourselves of the dualistic world constructed out of these we will be continually subject to rebirth. As Master Obaku (Huang Po) puts it:

'Continued indulgence in [...] dualistic concepts [...] will lead to your rebirth among the six orders of beings life after life, aeon upon aeon, forever and forever!' (WD 59)

For Nietzsche this is something we should be able to bear.

What Changes?

Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists share the view that this life is not your only life. Nietzsche (construed literally) thinks that after death, your life will be repeated in the same way an infinite number of times. The Zen Buddhists think this life will be followed by a finite number of qualitatively distinct lives karmically continuous with it. On the Zen view, future lives are either your lives or neither your lives nor not your lives. On the first view, you survive death and live another life that is your life. On the second view (if we do not just read it as deny what exhausts the universe), some future lives are in a way yours and in a way not. In a future life, a person is continuous with you but it not identical with you. Even if this life, on a Buddhist view, you are strictly speaking continuous with your young self not identical with it.

Now, I suggest that the problem of personal identity arises for Nietzsche's view and for both versions of the Buddhist view. On Nietzsche's and the first Buddhist view, you in a later life are numerically identical with you in this life. We know that in death the body and the soul are dissipated. We may ask the question, then: *What guarantees personal identity across lives?* I suggest that there is only one viable answer to this question: the existence of the soul. There are two reasons why this view is right. Firstly, in death, all physical and psychological processes cease. That only leaves the soul as a possible candidate for guaranteeing identity in a future life. Secondly, the emptiness disclosed in meditation which is really the interiority of your own soul does not admit of natural destruction (or creation). (Physical objects pass through it like a thought.) I suggest that the death of the body and the mind takes place within the soul, the soul that you were all along. As Kierkegaard says, perhaps surprisingly *we remain*. As St. Augustine says, when you die, and this human being dissolves, it is revealed that God was holding you all along.

There cannot be continuity without identity. It seems as though there can, because clearly a butterfly may be continuous with a caterpillar but the butterfly is not (numerically identical with) the caterpillar. In the case of death, however, body and mind cease so there can be no ordinary physical or mental continuity between this life and the next. Only the identity of you in this life with a person in the next life

guarantees the continuity of you in this life with a person in the next life. It follows from this that if you are continuous with a person in the next life then you are (numerically identical with) the person in the next life. Anything guarantees its own prerequisites.

THE ÜBERMENSCH IN SATORI

How should *Übermensch* be translated into English? It is often rendered as 'overman' or 'superman' but this is wrong. Paradigmatically, *Mensch* does not mean 'man' in German, but 'human being'. Although *Übermensch* is a noun, the equivalent adjectival form *übermenschlich* has the sense of the English adjectival term 'superhuman'. For example, the expression *sich übermenschlich anstrengen* means 'to make superhuman efforts'. The *Übermensch* is superhuman, that is, capable of feats or a mode of being which most human beings are unable to achieve. The preposition '*über*' means 'over' or 'above'. Used with the accusative it implies motion, as in 'passing over' or 'passing above'. Used with the dative it implies static location, as in 'fixed above'. It can also mean at least: 'on top of', 'higher than', 'superior to', 'more than', 'in the process of', 'during', 'while', 'across', 'beyond', 'on the other side of', 'upon', 'on', 'about', 'concerning' and 'with regard to'. Interestingly different readings of Nietzsche may be obtained by considering these translations. Here I argue that the *Übermensch* is an enlightened human being, in the Zen sense.

Zen also uses the idea of being *above*, or *over*, to try to communicate the more or less ineffable state of Enlightenment. For example D.T. Suzuki's says *Satori* is

'Just like ordinary everyday experience, except about two inches off the ground!' (WZ 22)

The Japanese word *Satori* and its Chinese semantic equivalent *Tun-wu* means 'sudden awakening'. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche has 'the philosopher' prophecy the character of the *Übermensch*:

"He shall be the greatest who can be the most solitary, the most concealed, the most divergent, the man beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, and of superabundance of will; precisely this shall be called greatness: as diversified can become entire, as ample can be full" And to ask once more the question: Is greatness possible - nowadays ?' (BGE 155)

The *Übermensch* is *solitary* because although he is physically juxtaposed with other human beings, his psychological state means he is not like them. He is not one of them. The *Übermensch* is *concealed* because he is not easily recognised as such by ordinary humanity. He is *beyond good and evil* because he is not bound by ordinary conditioned morality. He is *the master of his virtues* and has a *superabundance of will* because he is able to do what he desires and able to refrain from doing what he does not desire. The greatness of the *Übermensch* is like the *diversified become entire* because his unified, focused, mind is not distracted by incompatible thoughts. The greatness of the *Übermensch* is like something *ample that can become full* because the *Übermensch* is self realised. He has become what he really is.

The characteristics of the *Übermensch* are strikingly similar to the features that mark out the enlightened person in Zen. For example, Lieh-tzu speaks of the time when he studied Zen under the master Lao Shang:

'At the end of seven years, there was another change. I let my mind reflect on what it would, but it no longer occupied itself with right and wrong. I let my lips utter whatever they pleased, but they no longer spoke of profit and loss. Then, at last, my master led me in to sit on the mat beside him' (WZ 22)

The Zen Buddhist in *Satori* is beyond good and evil. Moral judgements do not arise in the mind of the enlightened person, or, at least, if they do arise they are not felt to be moral judgements. The person in *Satori* does not have the psychological attitude of *making* judgments. It is common to Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and the enlightened Zen Buddhist to be *de-conditioned* from a moral point of view. Their socialisation into conventional notions of right and wrong has been reversed. It has been 'seen through' or 'unmasked'. The psychological attitudes that were previously value judgements are now only thoughts, thoughts like any other thoughts that simply arise and fall away.

It is common to the *Übermensch* and the enlightened person to be misunderstood. For example, the solitude of both can be mistaken for a religious escape from the world. Nietzsche speaks of

'he whose solitude is misunders[tood by] the people, as though it were a flight from reality' (GM 117)

On the contrary, the *Übermensch* and the enlightened person are 'all here now'. They are wide awake, *de-conditioned*, and all their faculties are deployed in the present. In so far as it makes sense to talk about reality they are in direct contact with reality. Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists are opposed to the idea that reality is *somewhere else*. There is no meta-physical reality. Reality is in the immediacy of present existence, present experience.

Neither the character of the *Übermensch* nor the character of *Satori* can be fully communicated in words, although words can sometimes have a use in a Zen monastery in causing *Satori*. A transformation of life is necessary. Nietzsche says:

'It is difficult to learn what a philosopher is because it cannot be taught: one must "know" it by experience' (BGE 155)

In the case of the *Übermensch* and in the case of *Satori* it is necessary to have the experience to know what the experience is like. This might be generally true, I mean, not just true of esoteric experiences. For example, it is not clear that a congenitally blind person knows what the colour red looks like. It is not clear that a prepubescent person knows what sexual desire feels like. It is not clear that someone who has never experienced the taste of a decent claret knows what the taste of a decent claret is like. This empiricist thesis, that *knowledge of an experience depends upon having the experience itself* must not be confused with a distinct thesis: having the knowledge or the experience depends what paradigmatically causes the experience. For example, it is not necessary to know what bananas taste like to have sampled bananas. Some synthetic substitute that tastes like a banana will do. Similarly, the neurology of a blind person could in principle be altered to cause an experience of red imagery. Someone without sexual desire could in principle be neurologically caused to have sexual desire in the absence of any object of sexual desire causing that desire. The point is that the phenomenology is necessary for the knowledge of the phenomenology, not that the phenomenology has to be caused in normal ways.

In the case of the *Übermensch* and the person in *Satori*, the case is less straightforward. It is not just that these people have one specific kind of experience that the rest of us lack, some datable episode like a perception, a desire, or a taste. The entirety of their experience has undergone a transformation. It follows that 'experience' is something of a misnomer for *Satori*. To see this, consider two Zen poems, the first of which falls short of depicting *Satori*, the second of which succeeds, at least in the view of some of those in *Satori*. Shen-hsiu's poem is

'The body is the Bodhi tree

The mind like a bright mirror standing.

Take care to wipe it all the time,

And allow no dust to cling.' (WZ 91-2)

but Hui-neng's (better) poem is:

'There never was a Bodhi tree,

Nor bright mirror standing.

Fundamentally, not one thing exists,

So where is the dust to cling?' (WZ 92)

Shen-hsiu's poem depicts *za-zen* meditation from the inside. The body is the Bodhi tree because it is immobile. Breathing, and even circulation, are calmed to the point that they do not appear to consciousness. There is no outward bodily movement. The mind is like a bright mirror standing because it is clean and alert. Completely passive it reflects or registers what appears to it without judgment. No dust is allowed to cling to the mirror because no thought is held or retained by will. No emotional attachment is made to any mental content.

Hui-neng's poem depicts Enlightenment, in so far as Enlightenment can be depicted in words. Indeed, Hui-neng essentially says *what is not* rather than *what is* because the experience of *Satori* is so difficult to express linguistically. In meditation, the presentation of the body, the Bodhi tree, and the mind, the bright mirror standing, are precisely obstacles to Enlightenment. So are the thoughts of these, including linguistically formulated thoughts. *Satori* is a state of emptiness, or pure being, or pure awareness. As *Satori* it has no content and so no mental and no physical content.

How can *Satori* be emptiness, pure being and pure awareness? *Satori* is emptiness because nothing is being thought about and nothing is being done. At least, being in *Satori* does not consist in thinking this thought rather than that thought or doing this thing rather than another. Clearly, an enlightened person engages in thought and action. It is important to Zen that before and after Enlightenment you carry on your ordinary tasks, for example, before Enlightenment *chop sticks and carry water*, and then after Enlightenment, *chop sticks and carry water*. In the moment of meditation that produces Enlightenment there are no thoughts and there are no actions. The moment between thoughts is exploited and *enlarged* so that the mind is emptied of thoughts. There is then pure awareness or pure consciousness without intentionality, without awareness or consciousness *of anything*. After Enlightenment thoughts and actions return but there is no attachment to them and therefore no suffering caused by them. Emptiness is then absence of thought and action. Pure awareness is the retention of conscious alertness despite the absence of mental content.

Satori is pure being because it is being without being anything. This is perhaps a hard and obscure thought but one like it will be familiar to readers of the opening passages of Hegel's 'Doctrine of Being' in his *The Science of Logic*. There Hegel draws a distinction not only between *pure being* (*Sein*) and *pure nothing* (*Nichts*) but also between those two and *determinate being*, or *being something* (*Dasein*). Pure

being is existing *tout court*. Pure nothing is nothing whatsoever. Being something is not only existing but possessing at least one property. Hegel thinks the result of trying to think pure being is the same as the result of trying to think pure nothing and *vice versa*. Even if we take the view that there cannot be being without being something it should be clear that being is not *exactly the same thing* as being something. To say that something exists is not the same as saying *what* it is, or even partly saying what it is. However, once we accept that being is not being something it follows that being cannot be characterised in terms of being something and that is as good as saying it cannot be characterised. It then becomes extremely difficult to distinguish pure being from pure nothing, or being from not-being, except perhaps by saying that they are opposites. Hegel thinks they are dialectically antithetical; both opposites and mutually dependent. We may now think of *Satori* in terms of this Hegelian clarification. *Satori* is pure being yet emptiness. In the meditative moment when thought ceases there is still being rather than non-being. However, this being is pure being, nothing is apparently true of it except that it is. Indeed, 'it' does not pick anything out here. Because of that, the pure being of *Satori* is a kind of emptiness. It corresponds to the Hegelian dialectical 'identification' of being and nothingness and is distinct from Hegelian *Dasein* or determinate being. We could say that this is a description of *Satori* from the inside, with certain caveats: In *Satori* there is no distinction between a psychological 'inside' and a physical (or psycho-physical) 'external world'. In *Satori* there are no descriptions or, as a being in *Satori* one is not making descriptions.

Lieh-tzu reports that when he was a student of Zen under Lao Shang:

'My mind was frozen' (WZ 22)

This does not mean that Lieh-tzu entertained just one token thought for a longer duration than usual. He means that his mind was unusually calm or undisturbed whether there were thoughts or not. To unpack his metaphor, the ice is the pure being or emptiness that replaces thought or, when there is thought, is the unchanging background to thought.

Although *Satori* resists description, Zen Buddhists insist that it is nothing mystical or metaphysical. We should examine this alleged ordinariness in relation to Nietzsche. Nietzsche insists that the life of the *Übermensch* is nothing metaphysical and should not by no means be understood as a spiritual or mystical withdrawal. Asceticism is a denial of life but Nietzsche urges precisely the affirmation of life:

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'The denial of life is no longer an easy matter: a man may become a hermit or a monk - and what is thereby denied! This conception has now become deeper: it is above all a discerning denial, a denial based on the will to be just; not an indiscriminate and wholesale denial' (CW 188)

In Nietzsche and in Zen a metaphysical religious sensibility is a distraction from practical reality. Nietzsche says his wish is

'[...] to translate man back again into nature [...] homo natura' (BGE 181)

and Alan Watts claims that

'there is no incompatibility between Buddhahood and the everyday life of the world' (WZ 83)

Before Enlightenment, things seem to be what they are. During the transition to Enlightenment things seem to be other than what they are. After Enlightenment things seem to be what they are. First there is a mountain, next there is no mountain, then there is a mountain. Crucially, after Enlightenment nothing (not anything) is viewed with attachment. The enlightened person is no longer emotionally tempted by metaphysical or theological ideas. He lives happily in the present. Similarly, Nietzsche says

'[...] man shall henceforth stand before man as he now, hardened by the discipline of science, stands before the other forms of nature, with fearless Oedipus-eyes, and stopped Ulysses-ears, deaf to the enticements of old metaphysical bird-catchers, who have piped him much too long: "Thou art more! thou art higher! thou has a different origin!" (BGE 181)

In Nietzsche and in Zen human beings are not spiritual beings. The Buddha never claimed to be anything other than a human being. The *Übermensch* is a human being. Both Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen leave the world intact. Alan Watts says

'[...] in Zen there is always the feeling that awakening is something quite natural, something startlingly obvious' (WZ 77)

Being an *Übermensch* or being enlightened does not entail a special kind of self-consciousness, if this means the mind's awareness of its own contents. It follows that both Nietzsche and Zen are inconsistent with all forms of spiritual self-realisation that essentially involve introspection. For example, they are incompatible with St. Augustine's dictum that 'the truth dwells inside the man, in you yourself' '*in te redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas*' (PL 39 De vera religione 39, n72). In the poem 'Hsin-hsin Ming' (*Treatise on Faith in the Mind*), possibly authored by Seng-ts'an, the question is put:

'If you work on your mind with your mind,
How can you avoid a great confusion?' (WZ 89)

There is a fundamental distinction between two putative routes to self-realisation; inwardness and outwardness. Saint Augustine and Husserl think truth is to be found by a kind of consciousness of consciousness, a kind of inner reflection of the mind on its own workings and its own possibility. This is 'inwardness'. Other philosophers think that self-realisation is to be found in action in the external world, *as though we are empty inside*. Sartre is a paradigm case of this 'outwardness'. He thinks we make ourselves what we are by our freely chosen actions in the external world. If we have to locate Nietzsche and Zen either side of this dichotomy, it is better to think of them as endorsing 'outwardness'. Both emphasise practical, even ordinary, action. Their considered view is that the distinction between inner and outer is of little consequence for being who you are, because we freely make ourselves what we are by thought and by action.

Freedom

There are many different kinds of freedom, but a fundamental distinction is between *freedom to* and *freedom from*. Someone has freedom to do something if two conditions are met: *they are able to do it* and *they are able not to do it*. Someone has freedom from something if they are not subject to some impediment to their action or well being. This claim of Nietzsche's may be taken to express both kinds of freedom:

'Until now no single individuality, or only the very rarest, have been free' (CW 184)

The *Übermensch* is free from conventional 'herd' morality and is thereby free to create his own values. There is another sense in which the *Übermensch* is free. He makes himself what he is through his own actions. His life is a process of self-definition. It follows that the *Übermensch* has no fixed essence. This is consistent with Nietzsche's view that there is no self or soul that is the enduring subject of experience. In Nietzsche and in Zen there is freedom, but there is no self that exercises this freedom. Zen is sometimes referred to as a 'way of liberation' but this is something of a misnomer. The story is told of a student of Zen, Tao-hsin, who asks the master Seng-ts'an

"What is the method of liberation?"

Seng-ts'an replies

"Who binds you?"

Tao-hsin replies to this

"No one binds me"

"Why then," asked Seng-ts'an, "should you seek liberation?" (WZ 89)

This interchange causes Tao-hsin's *Satori*. Zen does not so much *solve the problem* as show the student that *there is no problem*. Or: *The solution to the problem is that there is no problem*. What we think is a problem is not a problem. To think of Zen as a 'method of liberation' that must be 'followed' is an obstacle to Zen. It suggests a future goal and some procedure to reach it. What is required is a startling transformation of the present and thinking about the future is no help in that. Nietzsche's *Übermensch* has also not reached a future metaphysical goal. He too lives in a transformed present. Nietzsche contrasts the *Übermensch* with the saints of traditional theism:

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'The man who today wishes to be good and saintly has a more difficult task than formerly: in order to be "good", he must not be so unjust to knowledge as earlier saints were. He would have to be a knowledge-saint: a man who would link love with knowledge, and who would have nothing to do with gods or demigods or "Providence", as the Indian saints likewise had nothing to do with them. He should also be healthy, and should keep himself so, otherwise he would necessarily become distrustful of himself. And perhaps he would not bear the slightest resemblance to the ascetic saint, but would be much more like a man of the world' (CW 188-9)

We may understand 'knowledge' here to denote either science, or common sense or both. We cannot take it to mean 'metaphysics' or 'theology' or anything with a transcendent sense. Nietzsche thinks earlier saints despised empirical knowledge (which is certainly an unfair charge against many saints of diverse religious traditions) but the *Übermensch* should endorse, or at least, approve of it. This is because he is thoroughly concerned with the empirical world and not at all concerned with a transcendent reality. Here there are strong parallels with the life of a Zen Buddhist monk. Both the *Übermensch* and the Zen monk are 'in' the world but not 'of' the world. Both are healthy. The Zen monks exist on a mainly vegan diet of rice with vegetable soup and their monastic early mornings and agricultural work constitute a tough spartan life style and cause rugged health. A Zen monk is a 'man of the world' in Nietzsche's sense. Zen monks laugh and joke and have an easy manner. They are happy in their simple, practical, tasks. The life of the Zen monk is hardly comfortable. Discipline in the monastery is strict. Alcohol, other drugs and sexual contacts are forbidden. In meditation a dozy monk might be suddenly struck on the back with a wooden stick. Indeed, this kind of shock treatment is sometimes used as an aid to Enlightenment; to break the hold on the monk of his ordinary conditioned train of thought. Nietzsche says

'To make the individual uncomfortable is my task' (CW para 192 p. 189)

Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists are far from promoting the *consolations* of philosophy or religion. They are trying to promote a sharp awakening of the individual, an awakening from the 'sleep' of ordinary waking life. This awakening brings great pleasure. Nietzsche speaks of

'The great pleasure experienced by the man who liberates himself by fighting' (CW para 192 p. 189)

Zen monasteries are often located in cold mountainous areas where the climate is conducive to a sharp immediacy of mind. Nietzsche says

'[...] we need habituation to sharp, rare air, to winter wanderings, to literal and metaphorical ice and mountains' (GM 117)

The Zen monk is a paradigm case of mental and physical stamina achieved through discipline and hardship. Nietzsche says

'we need (to summarise the awful truth) great health' (GM 117)

In the monastery, the Zen master might behave with brutal decisiveness to break the monk's sentimental attachments which are an obstacle to their Enlightenment. For example, if the monks take in a cat and begin to care for it the master might suddenly chop the cat in half with a sword. Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is equally decisive and ruthless:

'I dream of a combination of men who shall make no concessions, who shall show no consideration, and who shall be willing to be called "destroyers": they apply the standard of their criticism to everything and sacrifice themselves to truth' (CW para 194 p. 189-90)

Yun-men says of life in his own monastery:

""Our school lets you go any way you like. It kills and it brings to life - either way"" (WZ 132)

In Zen there is no room for laziness, pessimism or apathy. Zen requires absolute and immediate concentration in the present. Similarly, Nietzsche says at the end of *The Wagner Case*:

'There are lazy pessimists and resigned ones in this world - and it is to their number that we refuse to belong' (CW para 194 p. 190)

Nevertheless, some of Nietzsche's scathing characterisations of religious asceticism might be thought to apply to Zen:

'The means of becoming a medicine man amongst the Indians, a saint among Christians of the Middle Ages, an *angecok* among Greenlanders, a Pagee among Brazilians, are the same in essence: senseless fasting, continual abstention from sexual intercourse, isolation in a wilderness, ascending a mountain or pillar, "sitting on an aged willow that looks out upon a lake," and thinking of absolutely nothing but what may give rise to ecstasy or mental derangements' (DD para 14 p. 21-2)

Language and its Limits

One of the most conspicuous ways in which both Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen differ from various movements in modern Western philosophy is in their attitude to language. Twentieth century philosophy underwent a 'linguistic turn' which, although originating in Kant, is most decisively initiated by the work of Frege and Saussure. The work of these theorists of language was appropriated to make language fundamental to philosophy. What I mean by 'fundamental' here is this: It is not possible to solve, or dissolve, problems in philosophy without solving problems about language. At least, it is necessary to pay careful attention to the language in which philosophical problems are couched. Philosophy became essentially about its own language. The principle exponents of this linguistic philosophy in the late twentieth century are Wittgenstein, J.L. Austin, the French Structuralists, and Derrida. Now, although all of linguistic philosophy, Nietzsche and Zen are anti-metaphysical, Nietzsche and Zen are anti-linguistic. They think that language is an obstacle not an aid to knowledge. They think that a preoccupation with language is an obstacle to that transformation in what it is to lead a human life that they claim to offer. Nietzsche puts it this way:

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'WORDS BLOCK UP OUR PATH. - Wherever primitive men put down a word, they thought they had made a discovery. How different the case really was! - they had come upon a problem, and, while they thought they had solved it, they had in reality placed an obstacle in the way of its solution' (DD 53)

Because we are language users there is a sense in which we 'inhabit' language. Our ontological taxonomy is linguistically generated. We perceive things as sorts of things because we unconsciously subsume them under the concepts of our language, which are in turn pragmatically driven. To this extent, a quasi-Kantian linguistic idealism is true. The trouble is, according to both Nietzsche and Zen, that *we mistake this linguistically determined ontology for reality*. In fact: It is not the world. It is *our* world. This is why Nietzsche claims that in naming something we have not explained it. Rather, we have obscured it. We are likely to perceive in it, in fact, only the

properties it shares with other objects we call by the same name. In naming it as *one of those* we become blind to its uniqueness, to how it differs from what it is not. When thoroughly applied, this view of language has a drastic epistemological consequence endorsed in different ways by the later Aquinas and the early Wittgenstein: *The way things really are cannot be expressed linguistically*. Alan Watts says that practicing Zen requires

'having nothing to say'

and this in turn is because

'the truth cannot be put into words' (WZ 77)

Indeed, the Zen impatience with linguistic distractions from Enlightenment is expressed in the admonishment:

""Wash out your mouth every time you say 'Buddha!'" (WD 88fn)

In *The Way of Zen* Watts considers a four line summary of Zen. Zen is

(1) 'Outside teaching, apart from tradition'

(2) 'Not founded on words and letters'

(3) 'Pointing directly to the human mind'

(4) 'Seeing into one's nature and attaining Buddhahood' (WZ 88)

(1) implies that no propositional use of language is *sufficient* to communicate Zen.

(2) implies that no propositional language is *necessary* to communicate Zen. (3) and

(4) are nevertheless attempts to capture linguistically the experience needed to understand or, better, do Zen. Alan Watts reports a conversation between Zen Buddhists in which one asks rhetorically of the other

'You have no name [...]?' (WZ 89)

Although it is a contingent fact that people have names, it seems commonsensically false that someone has no name. The monks in Zen monasteries have names. It is not this clear truth that is being denied here. Rather, a practice is being advocated, the practice of living without regard for one's name. It would be beneficial for this practice to forget one's name, or even forget that one ever had one. This would make the familiar unfamiliar and disrupt habitual ways of experiencing or thinking of

oneself. Nietzsche thinks nothing is explained by being named. The Zen Buddhists can be understood as subscribing to a special case of this; one's own case.

Zen inherits the idea of reality or truth being inexpressible in words from Taoism. Indeed, historically and philosophically Zen may be understood as a fusion of Indian Buddhism with Taoism. In the *Tao Te Ching* are the two lines:

'The nameless is the origin of heaven and earth;

Naming is the mother of the ten thousand things'
(WZ 130)

It cannot be stated what the nameless is, what it is that is the origin of heaven and earth. However, the reader of Western philosophy is familiar with something like the nameless in the idea of a primitive concept. Suppose we took the view that being is the origin of heaven and earth, in the sense that there cannot be all the things that are unless there is something rather than nothing, existence rather than non-existence. (This is not a wholly implausible reading of Taoist claim so long as we read 'being' adverbally rather than substantively, as denoting something that *goes on*). The problem What is it to be? is an unsolved problem of Western thought. Despite the efforts of Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, the Medieval Scholastics, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel, Brentano, Heidegger and many lesser figures 'being' has resisted definition. There is a clear sense in which being is not 'nameless'. If 'name' here means 'word' then the name of being is 'being'. Also, even on the Taoist view, the nameless has a name. The name of the nameless is 'the nameless'. The point is that 'being' seems terribly difficult to analyse in more primitive terms. 'Being' seems to be a primitive concept. 'Naming is the mother of the ten thousand things' because in Taoism, as in Nietzsche and Zen, a kind of nominalism is endorsed: Either all that the things called by the same name have in common is that they are called by the same name, or, distinctions between things and types of things are causally or epistemologically dependent upon facts about the use of language. In one of Nan-ch'uan's lectures it is claimed :

'If there are names, everything is classified in limits and bounds. Therefore the old man West of the river (ie Ma-tsu) said: "It is not mind; it is not Buddha; it is not a thing".' (WZ 129)

Whatever it is that cannot be named is implicitly characterised negatively; as not classified in limits and bounds.

A poem of Ippen Shonin reads:

'When the Name is uttered,

Neither the Buddha nor the self

There is:

Na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tsu

The voice alone is heard.'
(WZ 129)

But Ippen Shonin later submits better version:

'When the name is uttered,

Neither the Buddha nor the self

There is:

Na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tsu

Na-mu-a-mi-da-bu-tsu

The point is that only the phonetics of the penultimate line are heard. There is at that point an experience of the language without understanding of the language. This counts as an achievement because it is a reversal of conditioning. It is in fact extraordinarily difficult to hear one's own language clearly without thereby understanding it.

Is *Satori* a kind of self knowledge? As we saw in the chapter on the self, the only genuine self knowledge allowed by Nietzsche and Zen is seeing through the self; appreciating that there is no inner psychic self. Nevertheless, on both philosophies there is such a thing as knowing what one is: a life process, or series of life processes, and on both philosophies this requires a calling into question of what we could call the self/not-self distinction. Nietzsche says

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"KNOW THYSELF" IS THE WHOLE OF SCIENCE.- Only when man shall have acquired a knowledge of all things will he be able to know himself. For things are but the boundaries of man' (DD 53)

and Lieh-tzu, when studying Zen under the master Lao Shang reports this experience of Enlightenment:

'Internal and external were blended into unity' (WZ 22)

and

'My body [was] in dissolution' (WZ 22)

and

'my flesh and bones all melted together' (WZ 22)

By a self/not-self distinction I mean: Each of us divides what is into two portions which are mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive; the portion that one is and the remainder that one is not. It is not clear that this distinction is drawn in the same way by different individuals, or different individuals in different cultures. It is not clear whether it is a sharp or a vague distinction. It is not clear whether it can change over time. What is reasonably clear is that most people draw it, albeit implicitly through their behaviour rather than explicitly in their thought.

In rather different ways, Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists are saying that the self/not-self distinction is not an ontological distinction. It is not a distinction in how things are. In the Enlightenment of Lieh-tzu the distinction is obliterated. In this monistic state of pure awareness and bliss no distinction between oneself and an external world is apparent. This is because no self and no external world is apparent. The sensation of oneself existing in confrontation with, or facing, an external world of objects is lost. To say that the self/not-self distinction is not ontological in Zen is to say that the findings of Enlightenment are privileged over ordinary beliefs and experiences. Enlightenment is insight, ordinary metaphysics illusion. In Nietzsche the distinction is not obliterated but exposed for what it is. He says 'things are the boundaries of man'. Self and not-self are closely mutually dependent. Where I cease, the external world begins. Where the external world ceases, I begin. The outside of my body is the inside of the external world. Self knowledge is 'the whole of science' because it is not possible to understand what I am in abstraction from my relations to what I am not. To say that the self/not-self distinction is not ontological on Nietzsche's view is to deny that it is a distinction between two substances and affirm that it is mentally constructed and, up to a point, arbitrary.

The kinds of human transformation found in Nietzsche and Zen contrast sharply with Platonic models of self realisation. Nietzsche says about Plato:

'Plato fled from actuality, and wished to contemplate things only in their pale mental concepts' (DD para 448 p. 321)

Plato thinks that before birth and after death the human soul is in communion or 'participation' with the forms; the non-spatio-temporal and mind-independent, universal, perfect, essences of things. For Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists, there is

no soul and there are no forms. What Plato takes to be ultimate reality is therefore only further illusion on their view. The forms are not metaphysical universals but 'pale mental concepts' that is, psychological concepts abstracted empirically. Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists think of their philosophies as the exact opposite of a flight 'from actuality'. Like Hegel, they think the real is the actual. Reality is all here now.

In *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche asks

'What then makes a person "noble"?'

and answers his own question:

'[...] the feeling of heat in things which feel cold to all other persons: a divining of values for which scales have not yet been invented: a sacrificing on altars which are consecrated to an unknown God: a bravery without the desire for honour: a self-sufficiency which has superabundance, and imparts to men and things' (GS para 55 p. 89-90)

These are examples of the nobility of the *Übermensch*. The life of the *Übermensch* is 'against the current'; his thoughts and experiences are not like those of other people, they are, in a way, the opposite. It is not impossible that someone should feel heat in the kind of object in which others feel cold (not because of the logical possibility of a sceptical reversal according to which what feels hot to me feels cold to you and *vice versa*) because arguably phenomenological heat is present in phenomenological cold. If something feels extremely cold and if something else feels extremely hot then there obtains a qualitative similarity between how they feel. There is a physiological reason from this: in feeling cold there is loss of heat from the body; in feeling hot there is gaining heat by the body. The transition either way may be phenomenologically indistinguishable. For example, carbon dioxide ice burns. Nobility in the *Übermensch* also consists in his free invention of values. Because he is beyond good and evil, he is free to act authentically. His behaviour cannot be understood by most people. Nobility includes bravery that does not depend upon honour. If I am brave because I wish to be recognised as brave then my bravery is lessened. I might act despite my fear, and be brave in that sense, but if my bravery has no egotistical motivation, if it could be *private* bravery, then it would, other things being equal, be pure bravery.

The *Übermensch*, like the advanced Zen monk, is self-sufficient: physically and emotionally. Because this self-sufficiency is 'superabundant' it allows altruism. It allows compassion towards people and things, but compassion from a position of strength not weakness. Lieh-tzu describes the experience of Enlightenment under the master Lao Shang:

'[...] there was no distinction between eye and ear, ear and nose, nose and mouth: all were the same' (WZ 22)

Although there is awareness in *Satori*, this is not awareness through one sensory modality rather than another. It is *the awareness common to all sensory modalities*. Not only is it possible to hear colours, smell sounds, and taste smells, in *Satori* there is an appreciation of (being) the consciousness which operates through these senses. One has, so to speak, become that consciousness and *ideas of* what one is are no longer persuasive. They are just ideas.

It follows that *Satori* is an original state, in both senses of 'original'. It is both highly unusual, experienced by few, and at the origin of ordinary awareness. Nietzsche thinks originality is a hallmark of the *Übermensch*:

261

'Originality. - What is originality ? To see something that does not yet bear a name, that cannot yet be named, although it is before everybody's eyes' (GS 207-8)

What the *Übermensch* discovers is 'before everybody's eyes'. Just as in the Zen there is the discovery that only the present is real, so the *Übermensch* draws our attention to something that was too close to us for us to see, something that once pointed out, is remarkably obvious. It is common to those in *Satori* and Nietzsche's *Übermensch* to be misunderstood. However, when Nietzsche says

264

'What we Do. - What we do is never understood, but only praised and blamed' (GS 208)

'we' may be taken to denote all humans. Although the claim is exaggerated, it is a familiar fact that enthusiasm for or denigration of a person, a thought, or an action is an obstacle to understanding these things.

Both Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and the Zen monks are hard on themselves. They are intolerant of their own weaknesses. Neither will tolerate mediocrity in themselves. Nietzsche says

266

'Where Cruelty is Necessary. - He who is great is cruel to his second-rate virtues and judgments' (GS 208)

Zen includes a kind of teleology, from ordinary suffering to *Satori*. In a sense it is the aim of each Zen monk to achieve *Satori*. Nietzsche says of the *Übermensch*:

267

'With a high Aim. With a high aim a person is superior even to justice, and not only to his deeds and his judges' (GS 209)

but caution is needed in speaking of *Satori* as an *aim* in Zen. Desire is an obstacle to *Satori*, so if having *Satori* as an aim entails a desire for *Satori*, then *Satori* as an aim is an obstacle to *Satori*. In grasping *Satori*, *Satori* eludes us. *Satori* cannot be approached directly, or, in another sense, *Satori* can only be approached directly. It is an immediate transformation of the present, not the achievement of a future goal.

Nietzsche speaks of the heroism of the *Übermensch*:

268

'What makes Heroic ? - To face simultaneously one's greatest suffering and one's highest hope' (GS 209)

The person in *Satori* is able to face his greatest hopes and fears, greatest pleasures and greatest suffering with equanimity. It is not clear that we should call this heroic, because in *Satori* one is detached from sensations and thoughts. If one, to that extent does not feel them, one does not heroically face them. Compare the case where two people walk some distance with a terrible leg injury, but one with an anaesthetic. We should call the first but not the second 'heroic'. Similarly, Nietzsche's *Übermensch* acts with optimism, with life affirmation and hope, despite the greatest suffering, but the person in *Satori* has escaped suffering. We should call the first but not the second 'heroic'.

Both the *Übermensch* and the person in *Satori* are in a position to revise their values. Each sees the world in a new, more holistic way. Nietzsche says

269

'What dost thou Believe in? - In this: That the weights of all things must be determined anew' (GS 209)

and asks

270

'What Saith thy Conscience ?

Once conventional morality is discarded, the distinction between right and wrong becomes a matter for individual conscience.

The Students of Zen and the Pioneers of the *Übermensch*

In The Gay Science Nietzsche lists some attributes of people whom he calls 'the pioneers of the *Übermensch*'. These are human beings who are on the way to being *Übermenschen*. There are some striking parallels between these people and Zen

monks who are advancing towards *Satori*. They are 'brave pioneers'. Suppose someone is brave if and only if *they act even though they are afraid of acting*. The life of a Zen monk must include many such moments. The atmosphere of the monastery is forbidding and designed to intimidate the initiate. The monk must renounce worldly attachments and humble himself before the master; perform tasks and pose questions even though these will seem hopelessly inadequate. The pioneers of the *Übermensch* are

'men silent, solitary and resolute, who know how to be content and persistent in invisible activity' (GS para 283 p. 219)

Zen monks are silent, solitary and resolute. Their activity of meditation is invisible. One can perhaps *see that* someone is meditating, if that is what they are doing, but it is not possible to see the meditating. That activity is invisible. In meditation there is contentment and persistence; contentment through peace of mind, persistence in meditating for many hours of the day. The pioneers of the *Übermensch* are

'men who with innate disposition seek in all things that which is to be overcome in them' (GS para 283 p. 219)

'Innate' is being used metaphorically here. Nietzsche does not think that advancement to the stage of *Übermensch* is biologically determined. 'Innate' means something like 'perennial' in this passage. Becoming an *Übermensch* requires not shying away from what is difficult or confrontational in one's life. Similarly, the Zen monk is trying to overcome himself, not through a direct confrontation, but through monastic training in *za-zen*. The pioneers are

'men to whom cheerfulness, patience, simplicity, and contempt of the great vanities belong just as much as do magnanimity in victory and indulgence to the trivial vanities of the vanquished' (GS para 283 p. 219)

'men with an acute and independent judgment regarding all victors, and concerning the part which chance has played in the winning of victory and fame' (GS para 283 p. 218)

'men with their own holidays, their own work-days, and their own periods of mourning' (GS para 283 p. 218)

'accustomed to command with perfect assurance, and equally ready, if need be, to obey, proud in the one case as in the other, equally serving their own interests' (GS para 283 p. 219)

Zen monks are used to obedience and, high in the monastic hierarchy, to commanding. It is also true that they obey and command in what they perceive to be their own interests, the achievement of *Satori*. Zen monks also operate ideally with perfect assurance. In archery, in making tea, in chopping wood, they act with unreflective spontaneous concentration. The pionniers are

'men more imperilled, more productive, more happy!' (GS para 283 p. 219)

Zen monks do not rely on the ordinary securities of income and family. The monastery is largely a self-sufficient economic unit and so substitutes for both family and job so they are not 'imperilled' there. However, the better one's Zen the greater one's productivity and the greater one's happiness.

Nietzsche shares with Feuerbach and Marx the thesis that the more a person puts into God, or any transcendent metaphysics, the less he leaves in himself:

'perhaps man will ever rise higher and higher [...] when he no longer flows out into a God' (GS para 285 p. 221)

In Zen, eschewing theism and transcendent metaphysics is a necessary condition for achieving *Satori*. These are distractions from the transfiguration of the present. The pionnier is not as ordinary humans but aims

'to be absolutely a man with a single lofty feeling, the incarnation of a single lofty mood [...]' (GS para 288 p. 222)

As we saw in Suzuki's description of *Satori* as just like ordinary life but lived a few inches off the ground, *Satori* could be accurately called a 'lofty feeling' or 'a single lofty mood'. Nietzsche's 'Fröhliche Wissenschaft', or wisdom of happiness, is like the path to *Satori*. A Zen monastery has a rather formal, austere, quasi-military atmosphere. Nietzsche says of those who are to be *Übermensch*:

'it is rather as among soldiers - almost nothing but blame and sharp reprimand is heard; for doing well prevails here as the rule, doing ill as the exception; the rule, however, has, here as everywhere, a silent tongue' (GS para 293 p. 228)

For long periods of each day in the monastery there is silent meditation. This silence is occasionally punctuated by the sound of a gong for a meal, or a word of command. Sometimes the monks are reprimanded, but almost never praised. Nietzsche says:

'this "severity of science" [...] it frightens the uninitiated' (GS para 293 p. 228)

The same could be said of a visitor to a Zen monastery, or a novice monk. An advanced Zen monk might well be reluctant to relinquish his progress and leave the life of the monastery. Nietzsche says of the *Übermensch* or near *Übermensch*:

'He, however, who is accustomed to it, does not like to live anywhere but in this clear, transparent, powerful, and highly electrified atmosphere, this manly atmosphere. Anywhere else is not pure and airy enough for him' (GS para 293 p. 228)

This imagery could equally be used to describe the monastic atmosphere conducive to the mental clarity and strength of the Zen monk.

The question arises of whether, and if so in what sense, the *Übermensch* or enlightened person should 'return' to the world. In a metaphysical sense this question does not arise because there is nothing but the world. 'The world' denotes the totality of what is. Neither the *Übermensch* nor the person in *Satori* claims to have visited any transcendent metaphysical reality. However, the questions remain of whether the *Übermensch* and the person in *Satori* should revert to an ordinary mode of human existence and whether they should socialise with ordinary people. The Zen answer to both questions is clear. Maintaining *Satori*, the enlightened person should promote good works amongst humanity and assist others to achieve *Satori*. In Buddhism, a *Bodhisatva* is someone who actually postpones their own Enlightenment to bring others to Enlightenment. It is also important to Zen Buddhists that they participate in the tasks of ordinary life. Nietzsche's view of the *Übermensch* is more ambiguous on this point. He says of the *Übermensch*'s return to the world:

'he suspects that there his best art would neither be properly advantageous to anyone else, nor a delight to himself, that through misunderstandings half of his life would slip through his fingers' (GS para 293 p. 228)

We should not read this to mean that the *Übermensch* should have no contact with *Menschen* because there is a danger of losing the attributes of the *Übermensch*. The *Übermensch* does move amongst the *Menschen*, even though he is misunderstood. Rather the *Übermensch* should be in ordinary society but not be subject to its values. Beyond conventional good and evil he remains an *Übermensch*:

'In this keen and clear element, however, he has his entire power: here he can fly' (GS para 293 p. 228)

Similarly, when Nietzsche asks

'Why should he again go down into those muddy waters where he has to swim and wade and soil his wings! - No! There it is too hard for us to live!' (GS para 293 p. 228)

he is saying that there is no justification for the *Übermensch* to revert to being only *Mensch*. Some passages suggest that this is not an option for the *Übermensch* anyway, as though it is inevitable who will be an *Übermensch*. For example, Nietzsche says

'we cannot help it that we are born for the atmosphere, the pure atmosphere' (GS para 293 p. 228)

We need not take this too literally. Nietzsche is not a biological determinist. He is saying the *Übermensch* enjoys the status of *Übermensch* and it is not a psychological option not to savour that status. Similarly, in Zen, it is not possible for Satori to be unpleasant. Far from being causally determined in his behaviour, the *Übermensch* is genuinely free. He exercises preferences:

'We prefer much rather to live on mountains' (GS para 377 p. 344)

The image of the mountain is recurrent in Nietzsche and Zen. Ch'ing-yuan:

'Before I had studied Zen for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains, and waters as waters. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains, and waters are not waters. But now that I have got its very substance I am at rest. For its just that I see mountains once again as mountains, and waters once again as waters'
(WZ 126)

It is of the essence of the Zen experience that the conditioned understanding of what things are is exposed for just that. To habitually take mountains as mountains and waters as waters is arguably a complex psychological achievement. To see something as a mountain is to take it as a large four-dimensional physical object which does not move, something which does not cease to exist when unperceived, something with a far presently unobserved side, something that might or might not be climbable. To see something as water is to see it as wet, as the sort of medium on which some things can float, as something that it may be possible to swim in and so on. All these are *thoughts* or *background assumptions* that are projected onto the mountain or the water and allow it to be seen as such. Zen training places these preconceptions in psychological abeyance and allows the direct apprehension of the object. Even this way of describing the experience is somewhat misleading if it implies a relatively enduring object, a perceiver, and a psychological relation of 'perceiving' between the two. Rather, the Zen student undergoes a transformation in his or her being in which the distinction between subjective perceiver and objective object is obliterated, or at least exposed as one more level of conditioned reality. In this transformed state, mountains are no longer mountains and waters are no longer waters. The object one

would normally perceive as a mountain is not presented as a mountain and the liquid one would normally perceive as water is not perceived as water. What then appears phenomenologically is usually held by Zen Buddhists to be indescribable, except perhaps by poetic gesture. This is because language itself is an important component of conditioned views of what is. In so far as the content of the state may be reported in words it is usually described in terms of transient and chaotic events or processes rather than objects. Before Enlightenment there is a mountain: conditioned existence. During Enlightenment there is not a mountain: *Satori*. After Enlightenment there is a mountain, but the mountain is known for the conditioned reality that it is. It is not taken seriously. It follows from the Zen account that human beings are meaning bestowers. In a quasi-Kantian sense our concepts are categories impregnate the contents of experience so that we are ordinarily confronted with a world of more or less familiar empirical objects. This quasi-Kantianism bears a close affinity to Nietzsche's perspectivism; what things are cannot be specified independently of the subjective point of view or 'perspective' of the human agent. Nietzsche goes so far as to say

'The *Übermensch* is the meaning of the earth' (Z 7)

Nietzsche also means that the *Übermensch* is the teleology of the earth. If the world has no metaphysical or theological meaning or goal, the only meaning it has is bestowed by human beings. In so far as human meaning can be overcome or gone beyond this is by the *Übermensch*, the superhuman. Nietzsche urges us to adopt this atheistic and existentialist world picture and dismiss the idea of a transcendent reality:

'[...] remain true to the earth, and believe not those who speak unto you of superearthy hopes' (Z 7)

Nietzsche's philosophy and Zen contain images of the conditioned as impure or dirty and the unconditioned as pure or washed. For example Nietzsche says

'Verily, a polluted stream is man. One must be a sea, to receive a polluted stream without becoming impure' (Z 8)

and

'[...] the *Übermensch*: he is that sea [...]' (Z 8)

The practice of Zen is often described as polishing a mirror. The mirror is the empty mind and the dust on the mirror is the repetitious constellation of thoughts and emotions that the mind is subject to. A clean mirror is a mind stripped of preconceptions that will reflect what is presented to it just as it is.

Satori is sometimes described as an ocean. Through meditation, one's sensation of oneself as an isolated ego located in a body is lost and the direct experience of the whole field of one's current awareness is made possible. It is this, one's consciousness, or one's present being as revealed to itself, that is compared to the sea. In this state it is no longer appropriate to talk of 'oneself'. The reading of Buddhist scriptures after Enlightenment is sometimes compared to swimming in a swimming pool arbitrarily set up by cordoning off part of the ocean. Because of the overwhelming importance of direct experience and the transformation of one's own being in Zen, after Enlightenment reading, even reading scriptures, is just one experience amongst others.

Buddhism is essentially a set of techniques for stopping suffering. Both Nietzsche and the Buddhists take the view that suffering and happiness are inextricably linked. For this reason, the escape from suffering is also an escape from happiness, at least as we ordinarily understand it. Indeed, Nietzsche thinks that despising one's own happiness is an important step in self overcoming:

'What is the greatest thing ye can experience ? It is the hour of great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness becomes loathsome unto you, and so also your reason and virtue' (Z 8)

Both Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists think that what we ordinarily term happiness is not true happiness:

'What good is my happiness! It is poverty and pollution and wretched self-complacency' (Z 8)

In Zen, ordinary happiness is simply one more turn of the wheel of *karma*. It is part of the oscillation between a more depressed or apathetic mood and a more positive and energetic mood that most human beings experience in their waking hours. It is prerequisite to Zen training to become exasperated with this oscillation between the happy and the unhappy, the suffering self and the non-suffering self. Nietzsche says

'How weary I am of my good and my bad!' (Z 8)

The experience of happiness and unhappiness depends upon our being conditioned into the 'herd' morality.

Although Zen monks and priests are traditionally viewed with great respect in Japan, it is unsurprising that their efforts to de-condition themselves should occasionally appear eccentric to the outsider and make them objects of mirth or ridicule. Similarly, Nietzsche says

'[...] all the people laughed at Zarathustra' (Z 9)

It is an unsolved philosophical problem what it is for something to be humorous, but it is reasonably clear that people are sometimes motivated to laugh at what they find threatening or do not understand.

Humanity has a similar existential status in Nietzsche's philosophy and in Zen. We are not spiritual beings on either view, although Buddhists sometimes use the term 'spiritual' for human development through their techniques. Both philosophies reject the view that humanity is made by and in the image of God. We have a natural origin and we make ourselves what we are by our actions. Nietzsche says

'Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the *Übermensch* - a rope over an abyss' (Z 9)

'What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal' (Z 9)

Similarly, in Buddhism, human beings have a greater consciousness of reality than animals but only a minority has experienced Enlightenment. As we have seen, part of the route to Enlightenment is ethical. In particular, the quality of one's present experience is dictated by one's past actions. It is because I did *that* that I feel like *this* now. In Zen, the antidote to karmic influence is to cultivate a spirit of giving. Instead of trying to take from the world one tries to give to the world. This generosity, which should inform every thought, every deed, every gesture produces a clear conscience. Nietzsche says about giving:

'I love him whose soul is lavish, who wanteth no thanks and doth not give back: for he always bestoweth, and desireth not to keep for himself' (Z 10)

When the Buddha left his family and palatial home for his journeys across northern India, he took only a robe and a begging bowl. The ideal of frugality is maintained in the Zen monastery and endorsed by Nietzsche:

'Verily, he who possesseth little is so much the less possessed: blessed be moderate poverty' (Z 57)

As in Buddhism, possessions are a burden. Ironically, we are possessed by our possessions because we are afraid to lose them. They are costly to maintain. They arouse jealousy in others who then wish to harm us. Nietzsche shares with Zen the karmic view of property.

Both Nietzsche and Zen Buddhists think of the transformation of the human as like light or lightning. Nietzsche says

'[...] the lightning [...] is the *Übermensch*' (Z 11)

and 'Satori' is usually translated 'Enlightenment'. Light or lightning allows sudden awareness. Enlightenment and the appearance of the *Übermensch* are shocking. Although both the *Übermensch* and the enlightened person are human beings, they are in a sense more human than the human. They are more completely human than the ordinary human. This humanistic holism is made possible by a purification of the body. The Zen Buddhist shuns substances which contaminate the body and is subject to a rigorous physical training which builds stamina. The diet of rice and soup is frugal. Similarly, Nietzsche says

'Intelligently doth the body purify itself' (Z 89)

and he praises

'[...] him who maketh himself whole' (Z 89)

Although both the enlightened person and the *Übermensch* are 'beyond good and evil' the Buddhist *bodhisatva* postpones his own full Enlightenment in order to perform works of compassion for his fellow human beings. Nietzsche also finds room for compassion in his philosophy, but compassion from the standpoint of the personal strength and freedom of choice of the *Übermensch*. With the advent of the *Übermensch*

'Verily, a place of healing shall the earth become' (Z 89)

Nietzsche is not saying the earth ought to become a place of healing. He is reporting what he takes to be a fact, or making a prediction. Zen is similarly practical. It is not so much that Zen Buddhists morally disapprove of violence, self-indulgence, lying and other practices we might normally view as immoral. Rather, they are saying that these phenomena cause suffering. If one wishes to avoid suffering, they should be shunned. The Buddhist 'ought' is much closer to a prudential 'ought' than a moral 'ought'. Perhaps surprisingly, Nietzsche says

'The man of knowledge must be able not only to love his enemies, but also to hate his friends.' (Z 90)

Buddhists are taught to disregard the praise or flattery of friends as much as denigration or chastisement by enemies. Both are distortions of the reality of the present.

Buddhism is not a faith. It is not necessary to believe anything in order to be a Buddhist. Being a Buddhist depends upon living an ethical life, eradicating suffering in one's own life and others by deed and thought, and making progress on the path to Enlightenment. To the extent that someone is engaged in this they are a Buddhist. Clearly, then, being a Buddhist admits of degrees. Nietzsche too thinks it is *how life*

is lived that is philosophically important rather than the beliefs that are held about it. He says

'[...] all belief is of so little account' (Z 90)

An important part of the Buddhist antidote to suffering is non-attachment. On one, rather superficial, level the mind of the enlightened person is like the mind of the unenlightened person. It has the same kind of propositional content. The difference is that the enlightened person is not an emotional prisoner of this content. Fluctuating emotion is treated like a moderate change in the weather, it is not taken seriously. This non-attachment, or breaking of the affective efficacy of one's own emotions allows one not to fully feel grief, disappointment, or ordinary happiness based on hope. It requires an emotional detachment from family, friends, objects of sexual desire, food and drink.

Buddhists recognise that Buddhism itself might be an obstacle to Buddhism. If the student of Buddhism is 'attached' to Buddhism this attachment is a further hindrance to their Enlightenment. Ironically, the persistence of the desire to become enlightened is incompatible with Enlightenment because Enlightenment entails the cessation of desire. Attachment to the Buddha, or to images of the Buddha, impede Buddhahood. Nietzsche's Zarathustra, the prophet of the *Übermensch*, says

'Now do I bid you lose me and find yourselves' (Z 90)

and

'[...] only when ye have all denied me, will I return unto you' (Z 90)

The transfiguration of the human, like *Satori*, has to come obliquely. It can never come as the direct object of desire. For a similar reason, Alan Watts says

'In *za-zen* there must be no thought either of aiming at *Satori* or of avoiding birth-and-death' (WZ 158)

Watts' requirement is rather too strong here. It is not the thought that is the problem, but the desire, or attachment to what the thought is about. If the thought of aiming at *Satori* or avoiding the cycle of birth and death could be regarded as just thoughts amongst others a detachment would have been achieved and an obstacle to *Satori* removed.

Although it seems Nietzsche's philosophy is atheistic and Zen is agnostic, this asymmetry is not pronounced. Both Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists regard belief in God as an obstacle to the development of the human individual. Nietzsche thinks the ideal of the transformed human should replace the ideal of God:

"Dead are all the Gods: now do we desire the *Übermensch* to live." - Let this be our final will at the great noontide!' (Z 91)

Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists regard themselves as eminently practical in their transformations of the human. Nietzsche asks

'Could ye create a God ? - Then, I pray you, be silent about all Gods! But ye could well create the *Übermensch*.' (Z 99)

In so far as the Zen Buddhists are willing to use terms such as 'holy' or 'spiritual' they are given a naturalised sense. A holy or spiritual person is one who lives an ethical life and has either achieved or is advanced on the path to *Satori*. The symptoms of Enlightenment are never divine but always naturalistic. For example, Alan Watts reports that Fa-Yung was so 'holy', so 'spiritually advanced', that the birds used to bring him flowers. On full Enlightenment the birds stop bringing flowers. (WZ 89) In Buddhism, the desire to be holy is an obstacle to practical naturalised holiness. Attachment to the thought of God is another form of attachment which has to be released. The thought of God in Buddhism has to be treated as one thought amongst others. For Buddhist practical purposes this is equivalent to Nietzsche's claim that

'God is a thought.' (Z 100)

It would be wrong to construe Zen as overtly atheistic. Because belief is not important to Zen, neither is disbelief. Zen does not operate with a distinction between the sacred and the profane. As Nan-ch'uan puts it in one of his lectures:

'In the great Tao there is absolutely nothing secular or sacred.' (WZ 129)

Atheism and theism are mutually dependent for their sense and equally beside the point as far as Zen is concerned. If theism is a necessary component of religion then Zen is not a religion. It is perhaps much closer to what people in the West would understand by psychotherapy, but psychotherapy of an abrupt and rather shocking kind. Despite the lack of recourse to God, Zen Buddhists would deny that their practice was in any way pessimistic or nihilistic. It is neither optimistic nor pessimistic because those two attitudes are premised on hope and fear, not immediate insight. Nietzsche talks about the *Übermensch* as

'this conqueror of God and of Nothingness' (GM 117)

He too offers a path of human self transformation that is at once non-theistic yet putatively not pessimistic. There is a sense in which Nietzsche may appropriately be called a nihilist. He regards ordinary moral values as herd morality, but in this sense of going beyond moral conditioning it makes sense to call Zen nihilistic also. Both

the Zen monk in *Satori* and the *Übermensch* are 'conquerors of nothingness'. The experience of Enlightenment is phenomenologically similar to the experience of the life of the *Übermensch*. Both Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists use the image of the wind to try to capture the idea of a certain kind of route through the world. Nietzsche says

'And as strong winds will we live above them (the impure), neighbours to the eagles, neighbours to the snow, neighbours to the sun: thus live the strong winds' (Z 116)

The great Taoist teacher, Lieh-tzu, reports that when studying under master Lao Shang:

'I was wholly unconscious of what my body was resting on, or what was under my feet. I was born this way and that on the wind, like dry chaff or leaves falling from a tree. In fact, I knew not whether the wind was riding on me or I on the wind' (WZ 22)

According to Watts, Lieh-tzu was famous for power 'to ride upon the wind' (WZ 22) Both the *Übermensch* and the person in *Satori* are in the world but not of the world. Nietzsche's advice is equivalent to attention to *karma* when he says we should

'Take care not to spit against the wind' (Z 116)

One has to become the wind. Despite all that has been said about the person in *Satori* and the *Übermensch* their manner of being is essentially ineffable. Nietzsche asks

'But what am I talking of? Enough! Enough? At this juncture I have only one proper course, silence' (GM 118)

The famous Taoist sage Lao-tzu says

'Those who know do not speak;
Those who speak do not know.' (WZ 77)

According to a Zen story:

The Master Shoichi Kokushi (1202-1280) maintained the Tofuku-ji temple in Kyoto in silence. After many years, the reciting of sutras and ringing of bells characteristic of monastic life were heard. A neighbour knew that old Master Shoichi had died.

The *Übermensch* is enlightened.

Is God Dead?

Nietzsche, because of his rage against Platonism and Christianity, and Zen because of its practical emphasis on transcending suffering, both unknowingly rely on metaphysical assumptions which are ultimately theological.

Their emphasis on the lived immediacy of the present moment invites the questions: *Why is there such a time as now?, Why is it now now? If past and future do not exist, is it only ever now? If it is only ever now, is the present the eternal present? If so, how is this eternal now possible?*

Nietzsche and Zen are committed to the existence of the world as *a world of becoming*. It is not that there is being, nothingness, and the transition between them. Rather, there is only the transition between being and nothingness and this means we have to give up talk of being and talk of nothingness in favour of just becoming. There is only ceasing to be and beginning to be, no ended and and no begun. We can ask about this world: *Why is there becoming?, Why is there change?, For what reason does anything happen at all?, How is it possible for anything to happen?, Why is there a world, anyworld?, If this is all there is, what is this?*

We can also ask: *Why is a portion of this world of becoming me?* As we saw in the section ‘Do I exist?’, for all their insight, Nietzsche and the Zen Buddhists have not seen the question *Why is this human being me?* meaning, given that *this human being* exists, in every psycho-physical detail, *Why is this human being me? Why am I co-extensive with it? Why is there such a thing as my viewing the world from it (here and now)?*

Neither Nietzsche nor Zen has the conceptual resources to answer these questions. Neither do the modern natural sciences, or aspirant sciences. These questions only admit of theological answers. If you think they can be answered without recourse to God and the soul you have not understood them. By God I understand the one omniscient, omnipotent, wholly benevolent spiritual being who created you and the remainder of the universe. Only God has the power to make a time now. Only God has the power to make it the case that there are events. Only God has the power to make this human being you. Only God has the power to make what is be.

Nietzsche intends his words ‘God is dead’ to express his view that belief in God is disappearing from history. But, ironically, Nietzsche’s words may be used to express the Christian truth that God took human form in Christ to die on the Cross for human salvation, even though Christ lives eternally through the resurrection. The atheistic and secular paradigm which Nietzsche exemplifies is beginning to crumble. The scientific and materialist attempts to answer philosophical questions over the last two centuries have all ended in abject failure. This is because whether we like it or not, *not everything is physical and very little is scientifically explicable*. There is a spiritual world and you are part of it. Philosophical questions have theological answers.

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