

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

**MASTER THESIS**

**NIHILISM AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO AFFIRM  
LIFE IN NIETZSCHE**

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**THESIS SUPERVISOR  
ASST. PROF. MUHAMMET İKBAL BAKIR**

**ISTANBUL, 2023**

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**by  
MUSTAFA MESİH AKDİN**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Philosophy**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR  
ASST. PROF. MUHAMMET İKBAL BAKIR**

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APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of master of Arts in Philosophy.

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ÖZ

NİETZSCHE'DE YAŞAMI OLUMLAMANIN BİR İMKANI OLARAK  
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Bu çalışma, bir kültür hekimi olarak Nietzsche'nin, Batı düşünce geleneğinin karakterini oluşturan nihilizm hastalığını teşhis etme ve aşma stratejilerine odaklanıyor. Nihilizm bir yandan, Batı metafiziğinin tarihsel serüvenine içkin bir mantığın kaçınılmaz bir sonucuysen, diğer yandan varoluşsal olarak insanın yaşamla kurmuş olduğu ilişkiyle ilgilidir. Çalışmanın peşinde olduğu soru, bir hastalık olarak nihilizmin kendisinin aynı zamanda yaşamı olumlamak ve haklı çıkarmak adına bir fırsat barındırıp barındırmadığıdır. Bu anlamda, Nietzsche'nin nihilizmin söz konusu çift-değerli ve çok katmanlı yapısını teşhis etmek için başvurduğu araçlar olan değer, soykütük, doğallaştırma, psikofizyoloji ve güç istenci kavramları ele alınacaktır. Nietzsche Batı metafiziğinin nihilizm sorununu örtbas eden değerlerin altını oymak ve kavramsal çerçevesini istikrarsızlaştırmak adına öncelikle değerlerin oluşturulma zemininden hareketle bir soruşturma yürütür. Böylelikle Nietzsche, doğalcı bir çerçevede, değerleri değerlendiren insanın psikolojik ve fizyolojik yapısını soykütüksel bir çalışmayla inceler. Çalışma boyunca Nietzsche'nin, söz konusu araçlara başvurarak, nihilizmi nasıl bir fırsat olarak değerlendirdiği sorunsallaştırılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Batı Metafiziği, Değer, Nietzsche, Nihilizm,

## ABSTRACT

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This thesis focuses on the strategies of Nietzsche as a cultural physician to diagnose and overcome the disease of nihilism that characterizes the Western intellectual tradition. On the one hand, nihilism is an inevitable consequence of logic inherent in the historical adventure of Western metaphysics; on the other hand, it is existentially related to the human relationship with life. The question the study pursues is whether nihilism as a disease itself also contains an opportunity to affirm and justify life. In this sense, the concepts of value, genealogy, naturalization, psychophysiology, and the will to power will be discussed, which are the tools Nietzsche uses to diagnose this ambivalent and multi-layered structure of nihilism. To undermine the values that cover up the nihilism problem of Western metaphysics and destabilize its conceptual framework, Nietzsche primarily conducts an investigation based on the grounds of the creation of values. Thus, in a naturalistic framework, Nietzsche analyzes the psychological and physiological structure of human beings who evaluate values through a genealogical study. Throughout this thesis, it will be problematized how Nietzsche takes nihilism as an opportunity by resorting to these tools.

**Keywords:** Nietzsche, Nihilism, Value, Western Metaphysics.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	The Antichrist: A Curse on Christianity
BGE	Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future
D	Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality
EH	Ecce Homo: How One Become What One Is
GM	On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic
GS	The Gay Science
HAH	Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits
NP	Nietzsche and Philosophy
TI	Twilight of the Idols or How to Philosophize with Hammer
TL	On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense
WP	The Will to Power
WS	The Wanderer and His Shadow
Z	Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

*I awoke you from sleep: for I saw that a nightmare was oppressing you. And now you are out of sorts and tell me: "what should we do now? Night is still all around us!" - you ungrateful ones! You should go back to sleep and dream better!<sup>1</sup>*

Friedrich W. Nietzsche

We live in an age in which all values have been turned upside down, all the schemes of meaning that give unity and integrity to our lives have been shattered, and all the truth claims that enable us to encompass reality have been undermined. Our coordinates that determine our position in life have collapsed, and all our road maps for shaping and organizing life have gone bankrupt. We feel that the ground beneath our feet has long since ceased to exist. We lack principles to encompass and justify all our actions. We now live in divided lives: the religious, the secular, the private, the public, the virtual, all of them drifting in a confusion that subverts each other's boundaries. In the anarchy and irregularity that has emerged among drives, human beings, enslaved to the guidance of pleasure and stimuli, have come under the siege of devaluation brought about by an overabundance of meaning. With the disenchantment of the world, all kinds of valuable things began to evaporate; differences and distinctions could no longer be recognized. Our cultural life is surrounded by the juxtaposition and superposition of everything valuable and worthless without any order or rank. Based on this, our system of signs framing life is bankrupt, and our concepts have floatingly become empty signifiers that do not correspond to anything. In this chaotic life, the farthest thing from us is ourselves; moreover, the distance between us and ourselves is so great that we lack the tools to identify our alienation and recognize ourselves. Our self, which should be the interlocutor of life, is lost in a fog that shrouds our horizon. There have been many periods in history when values have been destroyed and transformed, but the age in which we live uniquely marks the

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unpublished Fragments from the Period of Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Summer 1882–Winter 1883/84)*, Translated by Paul S. Loeb and David F Tinsley (Stanford University Press, 2019), 5[72].

destruction of all human possibilities and all accompanying efforts at valorization. We are facing a kind of exhaustion, full of doubts about great breakthroughs, full of boredom and disgust with humanity and life.

Modernity, under the leadership of reason and science, swept away all traditions and imposed itself as the only absolute tradition with an anthropocentric understanding in order to purify man from the mistakes and errors he had fallen into. Nevertheless, the development of technique and the sanctity of rationality did not liberate man as he had hoped but built a new cage in which he was imprisoned. After abandoning all that is transcendent with the human search for truth, it positioned the human being as the measure of life. However, the destruction of the desire for truth in the service of reason knew no bounds; first, with the changes in cosmology, the earth ceased to be the center of the universe and the original home of man and became a planet among the planets; then, with the idea of evolution, man was seen as a species among species and lost his throne in the rank of living beings; and with psychology, the fact that man was not an absolute rational creature and was a prisoner of uncontrollable unconscious activities, he encountered the impotence of reason, which he had seen as a guide from the very beginning. Furthermore, at every stage of the search for truth led by reason, the human being has become smaller and more meaningless instead of becoming more valuable. Having destroyed and abandoned all the sacred, humanity has finally destroyed the only sacred it has replaced, namely itself. Therefore, human beings themselves and why they should exist in existence stand in front of us as a problem. All the ideals that humanity aimed for with the experience of enlightenment and modernity ended in disappointment in the shadow of world wars: progressivism, universalism, democracy, human rights, etc. The indoctrination efforts to raise acceptable citizens with the ideologies of nation-states that pursue the process of civilization and cultural progress have failed. We no longer trust in grand narratives, ideals to fight for, or horizons to make sense of existence. Just as man, when lost, quickens his steps and becomes more and more lost, humanity has become increasingly radicalized into alienation, deviating more and more from every goal it cannot reach. The obsession with progress under the rule of technology has yet to get us anywhere, but it has derailed time and caused us to get lost in the flow of speed. The absence of the future has resulted in the accumulation of the past; we do not live in an age of excesses but in an age of redundancies, where an entire past that does not belong to the present takes up space.

We have rejected all claims to transcendence; we have eliminated nature, God, and the sacred from life. We can no longer encounter any other at all; in Heideggerian terms, everywhere we encounter only ourselves, that which we are most trying to escape and get rid of. Considering life incomplete, our inability to tolerate and accept it has reached such a level that we have turned to building virtual worlds that pull us out of life. We are trying to solve our inability to find meaning in life and the suffering we encounter thanks to our embodiment through transhumanism as a smooth dream in which pain and meaning are eliminated and the singularity of life imprisoned in the virtual. For humans, the understanding of being healthy by avoiding all hardships and struggles and the desire for happiness without any price has become obsessively their fundamental maxim. As seen in all these experiences, human beings' full understanding of life is based on escaping from being themselves; they are not even satisfied with their own body and gender, so they change gender and create new sexual identities within the possibilities of science.

What is the reason for all this to happen? As an inevitable destiny, this situation is due to the nihilism that emerged because of the devaluation of the transcendent values of the Western philosophical-cultural tradition and the shaking of its constitutive foundations. Nihilism is the loss of the validity of the conceptions of purpose, unity, and truth that serve to make sense of existence and the revelation that there is no absoluteness of the criteria that encompass life. It points to despair that existence has no value in itself and cannot be defended as absolute. In Nietzsche's philosophy, this is expressed as 'God is dead.' The death of God is not only the loss of faith in the God of any religion; it is also the death of the absolute guarantor of all transcendence and of the objective and valid truths that determine man's position in the universe. On the other hand, the insecurities towards ideals, pessimistic attitudes towards life itself, moral degeneration, and political-social chaos, all of which we have already mentioned at the beginning, are not the cause of nihilism but its consequences. In other words, nihilism did not begin with the death of God but was inevitably brought to light by the death of God. In this respect, nihilism is associated with the production of ascetic values that negate and deny life, a process that began with Socrates in philosophy and continued with Christianity, which is the public version of Platonism. Therefore, nihilism constitutes the immanent logic of the Western intellectual tradition and exists implicitly within it as an element that frames all its steps. In this respect, the history of

Western thought is the history of the construction and manifestation of nihilism in various forms and styles.

The first step in the historical route of nihilism in the Western intellectual tradition begins with Socrates. Greek culture went through a crisis of values in which mythology's position was undermined and lost its status as an explanatory narrative for life. The Greeks faced the question of the meaninglessness of life in the face of the suffering they experienced in the face of life and the horror of existence. The pre-Socratic Ancient Greek tradition was built on a tragic culture that would affirm life by centering Apollonian and Dionysian elements, two complementary opposing forces. According to Nietzsche, it was through tragic culture that the Greeks aesthetically justified life and were able to find an answer to the question of man's meaning in existence through a tragic destiny in relation to the Gods. In this way, tragic culture brings a healthy dimension to people's relationship with life, enabling them to accept the finite, transient, and changing character of the world. However, the balance that ensured the cohesion of tragic culture has unraveled over time. Realizing the danger of life becoming meaningless again due to dissolution, Socrates seeks a constant, unchanging, and absolute origin that will give meaning to and frame life against the relativization of knowledge and the uncertainty of the principles that differentiate values brought about by the becoming, change and temporal character of existence. This situation also points to the beginning of the philosophical search for absolute truth valid for all life. For this purpose, he puts reason at the center in opposition to life. With the dominance of Socrates' proposition that Reason=Virtue=Happiness, the dominance of reason replaced tragic harmony, and, in this sense, with Socrates, reason becomes the ultimate judge of life, and life is reduced to a category that can only be meaningful when evaluated within rationality. Plato deepened Socrates' understanding of life and divided it into two different spheres: the apparent world and the real world. Accordingly, the apparent world was deemed worthless as a copy of the original world because it contained becoming, finitude, and temporality, and the idea that what is valuable is the real world that lies behind the apparent world and can be grasped with reason prevailed. This approach, which views life in terms of opposing dualities, has positioned one above the other and devalued life itself by seeing the supersensible as more valuable than the senses. Thus, the conception of truth is constituted by transcendental values established through reason outside of life, i.e., in 'nothingness,'

in such a way that it does not contain any of the components of life (change, temporality, etc.); therefore, in this aspect, truth is the opposite of life. In other words, with reference to transcendent values, life itself, that is, the body and impulses, is denigrated and negated. This process, which Derrida also calls the metaphysics of presence, has become the only dominant valid paradigm of philosophy. Therefore, this opposition was preserved throughout the history of Western philosophy after Plato, and while Christian ethics understood life as "this world" and "the afterlife," Kant's philosophy maintained the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. Christian morality constitutes the most powerful aspect of metaphysical domination over life in history. With Christianity, life, and by extension, the world itself, becomes for the European man a sin from which he must be redeemed; the body and instincts are denigrated, and ascetic practices are exalted. To the extent that the world is seen as the temple of the devil, the abode of imperfection and evil, every relationship with life is distorted. Under the concept of free will, man is held responsible for all his actions towards life, and under the concept of sin, he is transformed into a herd man, indebted, guilty, remorseful, ashamed, and remorseful. All drives to enrich life are castrated by subjecting them to control under the name of moral responsibility. In fact, this metaphysical conception of life and the accompanying ascetic values were put forward to make sense of life, to give it a purpose and integrity, and to pave the way for human beings to accept life. However, to make life meaningful, it has devalued the very ground from which it set out, and by evaluating life from a ground that is not life, it has denied and humiliated it. Furthermore, while seeming to support life, it has masked and postponed the existing problems and caused new problems by making the human relationship with life unhealthy. Thus, ascetic values took precedence over the lived world, and life itself became sacrificial for the sake of metaphysical truths. In this sense, the philosophical tradition beginning with Socrates carries an implicit nihilism as a response to the idea that life has no meaning in itself.

Although the beginnings of transcendental ascetic values do not belong exclusively to the Western experience but refer to a period of time seen all over the world, as Karl Jaspers refers to as the axial age, the distinctive characteristic of the Western philosophical-cultural experience is that the will to truth becomes the central determining criterion of reason. However, although this search for truth takes on the founding function of ascetic values in Western thought, the destruction and

discrediting of values will be the result of the same search. In other words, the search for a universal, objective, constant, permanent, and absolute truth valid for every situation and time has brought about the self-destruction of transcendental values. In modern thought, which began with Descartes, the search for certain, self-evident, and doubtless knowledge carries the understanding of truth to a ground where life is meaningful only through the Cogito and rationality is absolutized. For Descartes, God as guarantor is what makes this knowledge possible and establishes the relationship between the cogito and extensional things. However, in Kant's philosophy, with the vision of space and time, the fact that human reason's judgments about anything that transcends experience produce antinomies, and the fact that things cannot be known as they are in themselves, and that objectivity is grounded only in human beings, put God outside the realm of truth. In other words, human beings are unable to go beyond the limits of their own reason and realize that there is no way for them to directly encounter and encompass reality so that the idea of truth sees that the absolute objective transcendental values that it had assumed and believed in from the beginning are not actually there. Therefore, the understanding of truth, which was initially centered on producing transcendent values, shook the foundations of transcendent values and exceeded them. This situation brings about the bankruptcy of all criteria for making sense of life and the loss of hope and faith in transcendent values. The loss of unattainable truth and the sense of hopelessness created by the absence of absolute reference points in life that are no longer valuable is the revelation of nihilism that has been latent through values throughout the history of thought.

If the transcendent truths that underlie the production of values can never be attained, nihilism seems to be not only a historical event but also a way of relating to life in which people existentially engage. If nihilism is inevitable and life itself has no objective absolute meaning and purpose, how can one continue to live? Is there a way to affirm life without resorting to metaphysical and ascetic values, the hidden form of nihilism? For human beings, on the basis of what evaluations can life be affirmed and justified? Can nihilism itself create an opportunity to affirm life? In order to answer such questions, Nietzsche first turns to the source of nihilism, namely the person who directly produces ascetic values that negate life. Therefore, Nietzsche is not interested in metaphysical discussions in order to understand on what grounds the nihilist

generates value; rather, he tries to reveal how the nihilist evaluates his own conditions based on psychophysiology.

In the first chapter of the study, I will examine the tools that Nietzsche, as a physician, uses to diagnose the disease of nihilism. Nietzsche's research directly directed at the nihilist is multi-layered, and there are constant transitions between layers. Primarily, by making the concept of value the main subject of philosophy, Nietzsche tries to determine on what grounds the values that make human life meaningful and provide us with the way the relationships in life appear to us are produced. For this purpose, Nietzsche uses the method of genealogy. Genealogy seeks to identify the processes through which existing values are produced in life by showing that their origins lie outside themselves and are, therefore, not transcendental. In this sense, genealogy is, on the one hand, critical because by focusing on the historical processes of values it reveals their contingency, their non-transcendental 'degenerated' origins and thus destabilizes them, and on the other hand, it opens up space for the reevaluation of values and the production of new values. Nietzsche moves from the historical to the psychophysiological layer in terms of the production of value by interpreting moral values as symptoms of affect. For Nietzsche, psychology is based on typologies, and what determines typologies lies in the relations of drives. In this sense, in order to be able to say what a person or value is, it is first necessary to show which motives and forces are active in it and how they influence it. The nihilist's values are related to a particular type of human being's assessment of his or her circumstances; this human being suffers from his or her own powerlessness and inability to express his or her motives and participate actively in life. On the other hand, along with genealogy, psychology and physiology are components of Nietzsche's naturalization project. Nietzsche does not try to answer the problems created by metaphysics on the plane of metaphysics; he deals with them in a naturalistic framework. For Nietzsche, however, naturalism is multidimensional in a way that transcends its meaning in classical natural sciences; it is not a kind of methodical reductionism or essentialism based on causal relations. In this sense, Nietzsche's naturalism makes no distinction between the cultural and the natural, treating nature philologically in relation to text and interpretation on the one hand and explaining the cultural in relation to forces and motives on the other. However, this is by no means an anthropomorphic approach to life; on the contrary, Nietzsche seeks to purify nature from anthropocentric

evaluations. Here, the most fundamental concepts of Nietzsche's philosophy, the will to power and its related perspectivism come into play. The essence of life consists of a never-ending struggle of powers in which everything is in relation to everything else, subjugating, dominating, and conquering each other to increase its power. Every power shapes life, transforms conditions, and makes evaluations for the sake of self-realization and effectiveness in life. Since each force is interrelated, forces always create resistance to each other and look for resistance where they can better perform themselves to increase their power. Life continues in this multiplicity in a state of becoming, balanced by increases and decreases of force in constant flux; moreover, since constants are temporary states, there is no absolute will or objective reality that transcends all forces. In this sense, each force is present in life by interpreting its own conditions of existence from its own perspective. What determines the perspective of the power is which forces are active and motivated in them in terms of their quality and quantity.

The second chapter of the study examines how Nietzsche diagnoses nihilism based on the conceptual toolbox in question. For this purpose, I first try to determine the conceptual framework of nihilism and reveal what transformations it has undergone in the historical journey of Western thought. Nihilism, in Nietzsche's terms, is the idea that life in its present form is unacceptable and, therefore, should not exist, but on the other hand, that a meaningful world that should exist does not exist. These inferences have two distinct dimensions: historical and psycho-physiological. In this regard, I deal with the hidden form of nihilism that emerges with ascetic values and the form that is revealed with the devaluation of values with the death of God in terms of the ways of evaluating life. I also discuss the forms of nihilism, such as incomplete nihilism, radical nihilism, and active and passive nihilism, in terms of the negation and devaluation of life. Then, I focus on the psychological and physiological aspects of the relationship between pain and meaning, which occupies a central position for human existence, and discuss their connections to nihilism. Afterward, in relation to pain, I discuss the resentment that arises due to the failure of the will to power to realize itself in life through the relationship between regret and debt, and I discuss how resentment has an impact on the creation of ascetic values. In the next section, I examine the death of God and its consequences, considering how the will to truth as a derivative of resentment leads to the discovery of ascetic values as a fallacy. The death of God is

the name of the destruction of the entire conceptual structure surrounding human life, of all moral, epistemological, and ontological frameworks. With the inevitable death of God and the revelation that life has no objective meaning, the last man, the nihilistic type of man that pervades our age, has emerged. For Nietzsche, this type of person is the most dangerous character for life because he is not interested in the meaning and value of life; he embraces nihilism, thinking that life is futile and temporary. The issue that we try to problematize and respond to throughout our study is whether the nihilism that human beings encounter with the discovery that life has no absolute meaning creates an opportunity and possibility to affirm life in terms of Nietzsche's philosophy.

In this sense, in the third part of the thesis, I analyze ways of making sense of life and overcoming nihilism by reevaluating values without relying on a transcendental ground produced by ascetic values based on the opportunities provided by nihilism itself. Nietzsche's statements quoted in the epigraph summarize his thoughts: Nietzsche wants to wake us up from the nightmares created by ascetic values that negate and devalue life and to call us to create values with which we can dream better dreams. Thus, Nietzsche puts forward the concept of the overman to overcome the last type of human being, which is the most degenerated form of human being that emerged when the crisis of nihilism became evident. With the death of God, the relationship between God-universe-human was broken, and the meaning of the conceptual framework of the human being was lost. In this sense, the traditional conception of man and all the elements associated with it must be abandoned and transcended. Nietzsche chooses the overman as a purpose to transform human possibilities into a meaningful life for oneself. However, the overman is not the destination of the human being, another non-human creature, or a species that progresses through evolution and reaches perfection. The overman has historically experienced transcendent values and the devaluation of values, yet he considers all this as an opportunity to create his own values. The impermanence of life, the fragmentary flow of everything in becoming, and the fact that nothing can be undone, the existence of death, does not serve for him to negate life itself and turn away from it. The life-affirming character of the overman is embodied in the idea of eternal recurrence, which is both a test and an integral part of it. Nietzsche liberates time from the idea of a transcendence established in the afterlife and reconsiders it on earth with an immanence shaped by the will to power. In this way, human beings do not resent the past because they are powerless and have

a finite, mortal existence but want their actions in life as if they will want them the same way every time. As a self-actualized will in its actions, human beings justify life by loving their destiny, which they construct solely through the values they discover and create themselves, without the need for any transcendental reference. In this way, nihilism itself, revealed by the death of God, functions both as an antidote, destabilizing and liberating from the yoke of values that negate life, and as an opportunity to create values that affirm life by preparing the possibility of reevaluating values.



## CHAPTER II

### THE PHILOSOPHER'S TOOLKIT AS A PHYSICIAN

#### 2.1. Value

For making nihilism the subject of thought, it is necessary to determine how it has manifested itself in history, the masks under which it is concealed, the components it has, and the layers it consists of. The fundamental aspect of nihilism is the devaluation of the transcendental values we use to make sense of life, guiding our practices and giving our lives meaningful integrity. The concept of value becomes Nietzsche's main concern in relation to the problem of how a justified life is possible in a world without transcendent values. For Nietzsche, the core significance of values lies in the fact that they shape the perspectives, principles, and tendencies that are decisive in forming ways of thinking, traditions, institutions, and practices embodied in the Western trajectory of thought. In Nietzsche's view, a fundamental relationship exists between the human being and value-based thinking and evaluation. In this respect, he often defines the concept of the human being as a creature that constructs values, measures values, and is subject to values.<sup>2</sup> However, Nietzsche expands the concept of value from something exclusive to human beings and considers it as an essential part of all beings; values are valid for “the behavior not just of humans but of animals and even of organisms generally; valuing is co-extensive with life, is even the defining trait of life.”<sup>3</sup> In this sense, as Deleuze says, Nietzsche was the first to introduce the concept of value into philosophy and to think about values.<sup>4</sup> Before Nietzsche, philosophers had, of course, talked about values and formulated philosophical conclusions based on them, but they had not problematized the ground from which these values emerged. For Nietzsche, all forms of philosophizing in the history of thought manifest

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<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *“On the Genealogy of Morality” and Other Writings Student Edition* trans. Keith Ansell-Pearson and Carol Diethe, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 45.

And see also: Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge University Press, 2006), i.15 (On the Thousand and One Goals): “Humans first placed values into things, in order to preserve themselves – they first created meaning for things, a human meaning! That is why they call themselves “human,” that is: the esteemer.”

<sup>3</sup> John Richardson, *Nietzsche's Values*, (Oxford University Press, 2020), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2005), 1.

themselves as a matter of valuation.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, he analyzes the history of thought regarding values to investigate the threat of nihilism, which inevitably manifests itself and whose symptoms appear everywhere.

In every relationship that human beings establish with life and the world and in every situation in which they affect and are influenced by their environment, they take part in the valuations that enable them to make sense of it. The values surrounding human beings keep them in specific ways of life, determine how we use our capacities, and give us a specific picture of the world. In this sense, all practices of thinking and acting move within a totality shaped by values. The elements in the value category play an explanatory role in sustaining our everyday experience of the world and determining our stance on life in general. To elaborate, values tell us which life is worth living and fighting for, and in this context, they produce a principled discourse on what the good life should consist of. Values are the name of the ground that explains what one's own existence means in life in relation to the principles that organize one's life. Thus, human beings shape their lives with reference to the values they possess, and life becomes a livable dwelling for them by looking through the lens of values; so, values are the prerequisites of life. Values not only shape one's relationship with the present but also frame one's view of the past and one's intentions for the future. So much so that one often cannot recognize whether one is acting based on a predetermined value for a particular purpose. Values, on the other hand, always constitute a hierarchy and ranking and involve ranking assumptions that we are used to accepting without thinking about them, such as the value of the living over the non-living, the organic over the inorganic, and so on. This all-encompassing nature of values leads us to assume that they are a transcendent imperative, and their familiarity permeating our everyday lives prevents them from being fundamentally questioned.

Nietzsche argues that every living thing in organic life has valuations that aim at life and create purposes in life itself. Values provide intentionality that serves the preservation and strengthening of life: "The standpoint of "value" is the standpoint of conditions of preservation and enhancement for complex forms of relative life-

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<sup>5</sup> Martin Heidegger, "*The Will to Power as Art*," in Nietzsche, trans. by D. F. Krell, [Volumes 1 & 2] (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 25-26.

duration within the flux of becoming.”<sup>6</sup> And “valuations, or, more clearly, physiological demands for the preservation of a certain type of life.”<sup>7</sup> The fact that values are present in biological life means that they are not the result of conscious activity but are unconsciously embedded in the body’s functions and are related to drives aimed at achieving certain powers. In this way, Nietzsche seeks to return values to their naturalness and to frame the psychological and physiological structure that constitutes them. The main perplexity in understanding Nietzsche's research on values lies in determining the distinction between the act of valuing and the valued, that is, its content and its positioning in relation to each other. Values appear, on the one hand, as given things to which we appeal independently of our approaches to evaluation, and on the other hand, they exist as something that accompanies and shapes the formation of the evaluation process itself. However, as Deleuze said: “Evaluations, in essence, are not values but ways of being, modes of existence of those who judge and evaluate, serving as principles for the values on the basis of which they judge.”<sup>8</sup> The essential point here is that values are related to the act of valuing, moreover, that the value of values emerges in response to the ways of being of those who evaluate them, and that in this respect, there is value only if there is evaluation and there is no value in itself, unconditionally and absolutely: “Whatever has value in the present world, has not it in itself, by its nature, - nature is always worthless: - but a value was once given to it, bestowed upon it and it was we who gave and bestowed!”<sup>9</sup> The emergence of values in relation to valuation activity does not negate the reality of values. It shows that they have no basis in objectivity and that it is impossible to approach values as an objective observer. However, the fact that value is not in the world and lacks objectivity does not mean that it is an illusion or error:

Value is not already in the world, waiting for us to discover it. But there is no necessary error involved in none the less discovering value in the world, finding it there. The only error is at the meta-level: the error of failing to recognize that value can be discovered in the world only because “we” put it there.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann & R.J. Hollingdale, (Vintage Books, 1968) §715.

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche: *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Edited by Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman. (Cambridge University Press, 2001.) §3.

<sup>8</sup> NP, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs* trans. Josefine Nauckhoff, Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 301.

<sup>10</sup> Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Ethics and Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 240.

For Nietzsche, values are, on the one hand, external; that is, they have no value in themselves and are not objective. In this sense, values are relative depending on individuals, but they are also universal because of the necessity for human beings to value and aim for. This conflicting coexistence of universality and relativity both enables value creation and provides a perspective that will eliminate the absolute domination of values.

Nietzsche's placing values in a perspectival framework and making them dependent on evaluation is another means of naturalization. At this point, we are confronted with another problem related to values. If values are not independent of the practice of evaluation, then every approach towards examining values will itself be acting from a particular value within a specific evaluation. It is usually confusing when Nietzsche examines values descriptively and when his evaluative approach is at work. In the case of Nietzsche, if it is impossible to deal with values independently of individuality and one's own conditions, how can there be a determining factor in the approach to values? As Richardson pointed out: "But although values are not objective, there can still be objective facts about values—i.e., objective facts about those perspectival stances, about what valuing attitudes there are, and what they value."<sup>11</sup> According to Nietzsche, the basis for values is primarily life itself, and life exists as a form of the will to power, so that power itself is the main authority to evaluate values: "What is the objective measure of value? Solely the quantum of enhanced and organized power."<sup>12</sup> And "Value is the highest quantum of power that a man is able to incorporate - a man: not mankind!"<sup>13</sup> In this sense, Nietzsche's dominant attitude is that since it is not possible for human beings to give up values, values will fail and alienate them from life to the extent that the perspectives that agents have in their evaluation processes diverge from centering life. Therefore, Nietzsche turns to the evaluator of values himself and examines what kind of perspective he has on life-based on his own conditions: "Formerly one said of every morality: "By their fruits ye shall know them." I say of every morality: "It is a fruit by which I recognize the soil from which it sprang.""<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche often uses descriptions of the superior, noble, and the degenerate, inferior,

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<sup>11</sup> John Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 73.

<sup>12</sup> WP §674.

<sup>13</sup> WP §713.

<sup>14</sup> WP §257.

yet these refer not to the values themselves but to the existential positions and perspectives of those who value them. These positions indicate the nature of the person in the power struggle and the attitudes they adopt. Nietzsche's aim in his inquiry into values is to reveal that existing values are incompatible with us (our physiological demands and drives) and that they prevent us from increasing our power and distract us from it so that we learn to reposition our drives and take the side of our will to power against the hierarchy of drives that is distorted by the values set by morality.<sup>15</sup>

When it comes to the Western intellectual tradition, the fields of philosophy, science, or religion that constitute its foundations have been shaped by the system of values produced by metaphysical oppositions. Due to their internal logic based on an evaluation opposite to and beyond life, these disciplines have established a world of values in which people are alienated from themselves, do not find the world worth living in, and face the threat of nihilism. The principles on which all these fields are founded, the methods they use, and the ways of understanding them, although they are different fields, are rooted in a certain way of evaluating life in a moral way. In this regard, approaching life from a moral point of view, they surrendered it to a degenerated culture by depriving it of the means to affirm and make sense of it. Furthermore, the values of Western philosophy and the Christian moral tradition have caused human beings to come into a problematic relationship with life and the world. The result is that values inevitably devalue their own intrinsic value. How does the devaluation of values take place? “This happens when they no longer serve to establish order, when they no longer impose obligations upon us when reality slips away from them, resists them, contradicts them.”<sup>16</sup> In this regard, Nietzsche's inquiry into values investigates how metaphysical thought has become, to such an extent, decisive in our lives and the possibility of constructing other kinds of values independent of it. Hence, he follows a path that will enable us to resolve the form of evaluation that caused that problematic relationship and to establish a new form of relationship that will affirm life. However, he does not aim to criticize values within the system in which they exist or to discuss their invalidity. The logical falsification of existing transcendental values and the demonstration of their invalidity do not abolish them. Therefore, it is necessary

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<sup>15</sup> John Richardson, *Nietzsche's Values*, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Krzysztof Michalski, *The Flame of Eternity: An Interpretation of Nietzsche's Thought*, trans. Benjamin Paloff (Princeton University Press, 2012) 3.

to go back to their origins and examine the ways in which they are constructed. Inquiry into values will not only displace and destabilize dominant values but will also remove the grounds on which they were created. This, in turn, will serve to create opportunities for the creation of new values.

From this point of view, Nietzsche uses several strategies to trace the premises and the context in which the values-based way of thinking that led to the cultural-philosophical crisis of Western thought took place. In order to deal with values, he moves between several layers - genealogy, psychology, physiology, will to power, and perspectivism - that accompany the project of naturalization. Each layer serves to explain the other in an interrelated and interdependent way. On the other hand, an element in each layer emerges with a new function in the other layer. Western metaphysics and the associated ascetic Christian morality started from the idea that life determined by reason must be understood in terms of objective and universal values. In this context, the concept of truth plays a central role. Throughout the history of philosophy, the idea of truth has been conceived in opposition to life in becoming and changing in favor of a constant and unchanging supersensible beyond the world. Nietzsche tries to understand what lies at the basis of the system of values established by this opposition. From what point of view has human beings become enemies of life, the senses, the body, becoming, and the finite? For what reasons did human beings feel the need to create transcendent values, and in what circumstances did the same motivation devalue transcendent values? In what ways have ascetic values set against life dominated the history of thought? What is the role of the person who produces and adopts a value in its formation?

Based on these questions, Nietzsche uses the genealogical method to analyze the conditions under which values are produced. Genealogical research undermines the 'sublime' and 'absolute' ground on which existing values are based and thereby brings them into doubt and historicizes them. He turns to the historical-individual human being who creates values to reveal the origins of existing values and make them questionable. Nietzsche tries to show that every transcendent value is, in fact, rooted in man's own psychological and physiological states and is produced within the struggles with which he has been historically engaged. To put it another way, in order to diagnose the disease of nihilism, he analyses the structure and moods of the body

that suffers from this disease. He tries to determine, as a physician, in which respect this disease can take place in the body. If values have an individual meaning and physiological-psychological content, then they have no objective basis in themselves. Thus, how values present themselves as objective and dominate the history of thought becomes an issue to be investigated. To address this situation, Nietzsche replaces the concept of objective and universal truth with the concepts of perspectivism and the will to power, which enable different interpretations. In this chapter, I will discuss the methods and basic concepts that Nietzsche uses to diagnose and overcome nihilism.

## **2.2. Genealogy**

In Nietzsche's thought, the genealogical method plays a key role in analyzing the values of Western Christian philosophical culture. Etymologically, the word genealogy is derived from the Greek "*genea*" meaning that it includes both the process of something's formation and the revealing of a generation. This process-based dynamic of the concept gives us a clue as to why Nietzsche takes this concept as a basis, given its engagement with historicity. As traditionally understood, genealogical research tries to trace back to the original source, starting from the present, linking similarities, kinship, interactions, and relationships with previous lineages. Metaphorically, it is also used as a narrative method that explains how a belief, concept, value, or practice originated, its historical development, forms of application, spread, and transmission. In this manner, we can speak of the genealogy not only of humans, plants, and animals but also of concepts, languages, and scientific disciplines. However, Nietzsche transforms this traditional perception of the concept and operationalizes it for his own values research by trying to show that linear and causal relationships cannot be established and that the threads of history are not as clear as they seem. The historical approach is always fraught with deviations, crises, and dead ends, in the sense that shortcuts in history are not the best way. Thereby, history alone is not enough for genealogical research; within the hidden character of history, psychological components are always at work with their power contacts. Nietzsche's genealogy works in horizontal and vertical directions, as historical and psychological, within power struggles. The horizontal direction is based on a historical approach, examining moral structures in different periods and, in this way, revealing what kind of transitions have taken place. Vertically, on the other hand, it reveals what kind of

psychological configurations bring about these transformations and how the constitutive identity of values is shaped. In this case, genealogy:

Nietzsche's genealogy, then, is an attempt to explain our having those beliefs and feelings that constitute our moral values in the here and now by tracing their causal origins to generic psychological states—typically drives, affects, inclinations, and aversions—that we can reconstruct as having existed in certain types of human being in the real past, and as having caused our present attitudes through the mediation of interpretations and conceptual innovations made by successive developments of culture.<sup>17</sup>

Throughout the history of thought, philosophy has always been considered the search for origins, principles, and foundations. Whether understood as the source of knowledge, the foundation of morality, or the origin of society and the state, the search for a ground that is itself the foundation of other things is the most fundamental purpose of philosophizing. In this sense, philosophizing in its usual form can itself be understood as a kind of genealogical research. At this point, what is essential is that the lineage consists of a non-disintegrated structure that emanates from a single source, has an unbroken continuity, and is closed to variability. In many aspects, philosophizing is often based on capturing the target concept in isolation from its relationships and clarifying concepts through the analytical description for the purpose of finding objectively constant connections and essences. Philosophers who proceed solely from ideas suspend historical relations and consider the genealogies of values as stages to be passed through before reaching the origin or as manifestations of the source in different ways. On the other hand, some philosophers, such as Hegel, who take into account a historical connection, treat the present forms of the structures they analyze as merely a more developed version of their rudimentary and unevolved forms in history. This kind of perspective approaches the past as something that is destined to reveal only the present. The past is seen as worthwhile only if it makes sense in terms of the current beliefs, ideas, and values of the present. In dealing with historical relations, it does not take into account its own historicity, as if it could stand outside history and describe it objectively; moreover, it claims that history always follows a certain internal logic, leading to the emergence of necessary relations which means that within certain rationality, essence, and purpose determine the manifestation of history. In this framework, in both ways, historical differentiations, changes, and

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<sup>17</sup> Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy*, (Oxford University Press, 2007), 12.

metamorphoses between concepts are often ignored and not related to the concept itself, assuming a seamless process between its origin and its final form. Thus, the researched concepts or values are tried to be placed in a non-historical, eternal, unchanging, objective, and universal position. In opposition to this attitude, Nietzsche puts forward a different method of genealogy. According to Nietzsche, such a form of philosophizing approaches human beings as if they are without a past and future and misses the reality of their natural and historical transformations. It also freezes the concepts it investigates and takes them as eternal truths, namely that the meaning of values and practices in history always has the same content and is adopted with the same motives; moreover, it is always there by default. Nietzsche describes such an understanding as lacking a sense of history:

All philosophers have the common failing of starting out from man as he is now and thinking they can reach their goal through an analysis of him. They involuntarily think of 'man' as an aeterna veritas, as something that remains constant in the midst of all flux, as a sure measure of things. Everything the philosopher has declared about man is, however, at bottom no more than a testimony as to the man of a very limited period of time. Lack of historical sense is the family failing of all philosophers; many, without being aware of it, even take the most recent manifestation of man, such as has arisen under the impress of certain religions, even certain political events, as the fixed form from which one has to start out. They will not learn that man has become, that the faculty of cognition has become; while some of them would have it that the whole world is spun out of this faculty of cognition.<sup>18</sup>

Philosophers are allergic to becoming and consider it lacking and incomplete for something to have a process of becoming, so they believe that by de-historicizing something through concepts, they give it dignity and uniqueness.<sup>19</sup> In other words, throughout the history of thought, they have insisted on freezing the concepts they deal with and thinking of them as the same as themselves, unchanging and permanent: “All that philosophers have been handling for thousands of years is conceptual mummies; nothing real has ever left their hands alive.”<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Nietzsche defines the sense of history as “the ability quickly to guess the rank order of the valuations that a people, a society, an individual has lived.”<sup>21</sup> In this sense, having a sense of history means the ability to comprehend the layers of relations between values, the centers of power that led to their formation, and the forms of hegemony they impose.

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<sup>18</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12. (Hereafter, I will refer to this work as HAH.)

<sup>19</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Twilight of The Idols* trans. Large Duncan (Oxford University Press, 1998). 16.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> BGE §224.

In a way that emphasizes the importance of historical-critical thought, Nietzsche wrote *On the Genealogy of Morals*, which criticizes the genealogical moral analyses of the English moralists of his time, such as Paul Rée and Herbert Spencer. For Nietzsche, morality expresses a certain position that determines our way of comprehending the world and our attitude toward understanding life, so when Nietzsche deals with morality, he is primarily concerned with the foundation of our values and the conditions under which we evaluate them. The fact that the text's title is not the genealogy of morality by itself and that the phrase "on" is included shows that Nietzsche does not aim to draw a complete genealogy of morality but only to criticize a certain kind of genealogical understanding. In other words, unlike other philosophers, Nietzsche does not seek the genealogy of a universal morality; there is no absolute single origin, no genealogy that can be found by going backward. Remarkably, in his text, Nietzsche does not posit genealogy as a method used by himself. However, he does describe a new and different genealogy towards moral values, in contrast to the genealogical relationships drawn by the English moralists in their search for origins. At the same time, the fact that the subtitle of the text is "a polemic" emphasizes its perspectival aspect as a rhetoric and not objective scientific research. It means that Nietzsche is already conducting a counter-genealogical study from the beginning. In this respect, genealogy has a concrete character for understanding the main approaches and modes of discussion in Nietzsche's thought. English moralists focus on utility and teleological explanations in their research on the origin of morality. They consider that the moral concepts they deal with always have good intentions in their origins and that good concepts are derived from good practices. For them, the virtues in question are considered as if they have not undergone certain changes throughout history but have been adopted in the same way for everyone and have always existed in a single form simply because they have proven their benefits. Moreover, they argue that all of the so-called virtues of the present good are motivated by the same motivation in history and are essentially unselfish acts done for the sake of others, which are determined by utilitarianism.<sup>22</sup> Thus, instead of moral concepts that have concretely emerged on the stage of history through many different networks of relations, they are imposed on the rest of humanity by thinking of them as if they were already there. In doing so, philosophers do not doubt whether their conclusions

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<sup>22</sup> GM I §2.

are guided by the value standards of their own time. What they have done is nothing more than try to find an origin that will serve the purposes of the common usages of their time. Moreover, their intention to trace their origins is often to legitimize their own value judgments. In this sense, the search for origins is loaded with a certain evaluation from the very beginning. Nietzsche blames these thinkers for not seeing anything problematic or suspicious here and for treating values themselves as inviolable, constant, and "given" facts.<sup>23</sup> From this point of view, Nietzsche states that the most fundamental problem of moral research is that morality itself has not been problematized.<sup>24</sup> In other words, they treat morality as something that is already recognized as a condition for life, but as if the only problem is to decide what the ground on which it should be based should be, and as something that can be solved by doing its reasoning in one way or another. As Nietzsche put it:

Viewed properly, the "grounding of morals" (as philosophers called it, as they demanded it of themselves) was only an erudite form of good faith in the dominant morality, a new way of expressing it; as such, it was itself already situated within the terms of a certain morality. In the last analysis, it even constitutes a type of denial that these morals can be regarded as a problem. But, in any event, it is the opposite of an examination, dissection, interrogation, vivisection of precisely this article of faith.<sup>25</sup>

Since Socrates, philosophers have tried to find a rational basis for moral values, but their work has been limited to analyzing the values found in the dominant forms of morality that already exist as presupposed by their own criteria of valuation. In this context, since they never considered morality itself to be a problem, they never dared to confront it directly. What makes them think that morality rests solely on rational foundations and that the most accurate explanation can only be found on this ground? When something is evaluated rationally, it is desirable that it is an objective fact, independent of personalization, and acceptable to anyone. However, moralists do not realize that the motivation for their way of thinking is itself framed from the outset by a value that is established beyond life. Nietzsche rejects the search for the origin of morality on the basis of rationality and focuses on what moral ideals mean for us. Unlike the English moralists, Nietzsche followed a path in his research that included history, physiology, psychology, and philology. By addressing the question of morality from a new perspective, he problematizes the conditions under which the

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<sup>23</sup> BGE §186.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

values that determine our lives have been produced so far and what direct contribution they make to our lives.

Under what conditions did man invent the value judgments good and evil? and what value do they themselves have? Have they up to now obstructed or promoted human flourishing? Are they a sign of distress, poverty, and the degeneration of life? Or, on the contrary, do they reveal the fullness, strength, and will of life, its courage, its confidence, its future?<sup>26</sup>

The emphasis on conditions has not only a historical content but is also directed towards the psycho-physiological structures of those who evaluate values, taking into consideration their particularity. At the same time, conditions bring morality, analyzed as supersensible, down to earth, and allow us to contemplate what its changes and transformations tell us about the function they have in determining life.

In the history of philosophy, the usual way of criticizing an idea is characterized by finding logical contradictions, proving that one or more of the premises is false and, therefore, the conclusion is wrong, and developing counter-arguments. Nietzsche does not try to evaluate and refute the validity and consistency of the moralists' arguments; moreover, he has nothing to do with refutation.<sup>27</sup> To think through refutations is to proceed from the idea that the epistemic is decisive and essential for life. But even if something is false as a judgment, it can still be a necessary condition for life, that is, something without which we cannot go on living; this is, in a sense, the return of falsehood - but not as a Hegelian negation - to the subject of thought. We think that our epistemic framework should take precedence over life, so much so that we tend to worry that reaching false conclusions will lead us to reject life altogether, to find it false.<sup>28</sup> However, Nietzsche argues that instead of this epistemic understanding, we should focus on how much a judgment enhances and protects life. Nietzsche's attitude also has the power to transform our judgments of truth and falsity as we understand them in classical epistemology. In this framework, he announces the new task that his philosophy is pursuing:

We need a critique of moral values, the value of these values should itself, for once, be examined – and so we need to know about the conditions and circumstances under which the values grew up, developed and changed (morality as result, as symptom, as mask, as tartuffery,

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<sup>26</sup> GM Preface §3.

<sup>27</sup> GM Preface §4.

<sup>28</sup> BGE §4.

as sickness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause, remedy, stimulant, inhibition, poison), since we have neither had this knowledge up till now nor even desired it.<sup>29</sup>

Nietzsche's demand is to reverse the relationship between value and evaluator. Philosophy generally assumes that we should treat values as constant facts and that we make evaluations in life on the basis of their principles. However, the values in question were realized as a consequence of a certain evaluation in the first place. In other words, there is no value that already exists before the evaluation, and it cannot be dissociated from the way the evaluator self-expresses. Evaluations are “modes of existence of those who judge and evaluate, serving as principles for the values on the basis of which they judge.”<sup>30</sup> Nietzsche wants to discuss how values are produced in history; he argues that they do not have an origin that can be their own cause but rather undergo a change in the process. Instead of acting from the conceptual framework determined by values, Nietzsche prioritizes life; in other words, he questions the meaning of these values from the perspective of life. In terms of life, have values changed us for the better? Have they made room for us to affirm life, or have they distorted our relationship with life and undermined a healthy connection? What kind of a way of life does having transcendental values give us, and does it have positive implications in itself, as one might think? The inquiry into the conditions of values is vital in terms of diagnosing nihilism, which is the main subject of our study, and providing the possibility of a treatment that can be found against nihilism from the same point. Analyzing the conditions under which values are created does not mean a simple historiography. On the one hand, this enables us to show that values are not constant, that is, they are contingent, and on the other hand, it provides us with the opportunity to analyze the conditions of possibility for new value creations. In other words, while Nietzsche is concerned with the past, he deals with it in a way that tries to reveal the determinations of the present and tries to create an opportunity that will open up space for the present; in Foucauldian terms, he focuses on the “history of the present.”

If Nietzsche does not refute moral values themselves by appealing to a logical method, what role does the method of genealogy play? What is its distinctive function from

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid,

<sup>30</sup> NP, 1.

other genealogies, and how does it help us to create new values? To address this issue, we must pay attention to the distinctions Nietzsche makes in his terminology. As Foucault has shown, Nietzsche uses the concept of origin in three different ways throughout his text *On the Genealogy of Morality*: *Ursprung*, *Entstehung*, and *Herkunft*.<sup>31</sup> He distinguished between the concept of origin (*Ursprung*) used in classical metaphysics and his own concept of origin (*Herkunft*). *Ursprung* means absolute origin, purified from all determinations and qualities, which precedes all things and is the source of all others. The search for absolute origins by metaphysicians always seeks to find a starting point, a founding Ground, a first text that can be gathered into a single coherent center. The reason for the emphasis on origin seems to be based on the belief that what was in the beginning, what was first, should be more precious and sublime: "To glorify the origin -that is the metaphysical aftershoot that breaks out when we meditate on history and makes us believe that what stands at the beginning of all things is also what is most valuable and essential."<sup>32</sup> The idea of origins is always constructed as the opposite of life, as something outside of becoming, something timeless, because the principle that determines what takes place in life is thought to have to exist in a position beyond and transcending it. Therefore, it is conceptualized as an ideal that is self-sufficient, without deficiency, without obstacles, and independent of its subsequent determinations and relations. As Foucault said: "It comes before the body, before the world and time; it is associated with the gods, and its story is always sung as a theogony."<sup>33</sup> What belongs to history, what occurs in everyday life and is perceived with our senses, is considered worthless due to its arbitrary, random qualities and non-universalizability, and therefore cannot be viewed as a source of origin: "Things of the highest value must have another, separate origin of their own, – they cannot be derived from this ephemeral, seductive, deceptive, lowly world, from this mad chaos of confusion and desire."<sup>34</sup> From this point of view, the fascination with origins is perceived as the discovery of a source that can give meaning to everything and even as a solution to all the problems of humanity<sup>35</sup> because it is thought to be uncontaminated, free from all worldly determinations.

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<sup>31</sup> Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 77.

<sup>32</sup> WS §3.

<sup>33</sup> Foucault, op. cit. 79.

<sup>34</sup> BGE §2.

<sup>35</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), §44.

A function of the classical genealogical study of any lineage, similar to that of metaphysicians, is that it serves to ground one's self in a noble, supreme, pure ancestor. By tracing their ancestry back to a lineage in the past, people can gain a position in present-day social relations, claim a throne, or receive a share of inheritance. Nations can consolidate themselves by referring to certain victories in history, and this can be used to exert pressure on other nations. By means of the past, people tried to legitimize their present position because of ancestral bloodlines. This demonstrates that human beings are always struggling with the past and that the past is always intervening in the present. Since all individuals within a species are already related to each other, the person who wants to proudly boast of his or her ancestry usually hides unclean origins and excludes tainted ties from the genealogy. In this way, the origins researcher trivializes and ignores many influences and factors, and at the same time, by concealing the points of contact of other components with the origin, he draws a self-justifying and self-validating lineage in perfect continuity, thereby imposing his construct as objective reality.

In contrast to *Ursprung*, Nietzsche places the concept of *Herkunft*, which means bloodline or descent and includes hereditary properties related to the body, pointing to race or the emergence of social groups.<sup>36</sup> Through the concept of *Herkunft*, structures that are in the process of formation, that are incomplete, that do not depend on a single origin, that are historical, and that are revealed in relationships are made the object of research. The change in the concept means the naturalization of values, which are tried to be found on rational foundations as transcendental, that is, beyond the senses, by bringing them back to life through history. This approach represents a kind of Copernican revolution since values are not analyzed in themselves but in relation to concrete individuals who both produce them, depend on them, and experience them. The human being in question here is not, as has been done throughout Western philosophy, a creature purified of its attributes or defined by abstract concepts such as mind, soul, subject, and essence, but the embodied one with many historical, physiological, and psychological layers. On the other side, these values are not only natural, but the positions they are characterized as sublime in fact contain within them the shameful, blood, brutality, war, and chaos, that is, the inferior. Instead of looking

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<sup>36</sup> Foucault, Ibid.

for identities, similarities, or general characteristics, the use of *Herkunft* focuses on describing unique, singular, and indirect signs that intersect to form complex networks. It highlights the role of distortions, stumbles, detours, dead ends, coincidences, accidents, misinterpretations, and misunderstandings in the course of history in determining something.<sup>37</sup> By exploring the complexity, interconnectedness, polyvalence, heterogeneity, and instability of our identities, this method challenges our beliefs and reveals the fundamental forces that shape us. Genealogy is not about tracing an unbroken continuity from the past to the present but about following complex genealogical processes, taking into consideration diverse and variable events that occur in leaps, regressions, and contradictory paths. In this respect, it breaks down our absolute schemas and questions our beliefs and knowledge, uncovering the biases and hidden influences that underlie seemingly objective pursuits. There is neither an absolute origin of moral values nor an absolute goal-orientated moral practice. Nietzsche shows that the concept of origin (*Ursprung*), which philosophers seek as the basis of everything, is, in fact, nothing more than a descent (*Herkunft*) or an emergence (*Entstehung*). By drawing another genealogy of our moral values, Nietzsche tries to show that the search for origins has a contingent character and that an absolute lineage/generation cannot be drawn. It indicates that history is constituted by certain complex forms of relations and that other kinds of possibilities and becomings are feasible. The fact that they have no absolute origin or essence and have a purely contingent history does not mean that the development of these structures is founded solely on random and accidental forces. For Nietzsche, a certain psychological process is at work in the construction of values, rooted in physiological influences and based on a sense of resentment. On the other hand, the emphasis on contingency serves not only a descriptive function but also an evaluative and critical one. Moreover, what genealogy tries to do is only to destabilize their sovereignty by undermining their claims to absoluteness, the grounds on which they legitimize themselves and the prejudices they conceal in doing so, and to open the door to multi-meaning perception by liberating them from univocal understanding.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Foucault, *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> P.J.E Kail, '*Genealogy*' and the *Genealogy*. in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Critical Guide*. Ed. Simon May. (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 214-233.

Moral origins are not as explicit and obvious as English moralists assume; they are grey, that is, they are ambiguous.<sup>39</sup> To put it more precisely, an inquiry into the origin of something has involved many other new and different, even contradictory situations. There are always twists and turns, overlaps, disintegrations, and conflicts, and there is no clarity with which we can trace them and easily grasp their transformation in a cause-and-effect relationship. As we move towards the origin, what we set out to do appears to have nothing to do with the origin.<sup>40</sup> No matter what we desire for the past, history always gives us something beyond our desire. The closer we get to what we have in mind when we go back to the past based on our fiction in the present, the more we have deviated from our path. It follows that there is an unbridgeable difference between the origins of values and moral practices and their current valid meanings. On the one hand, something that was once an essential element becomes a part of another element in an insignificant role at another time, or a concept is eviscerated and reappeared around a new discourse. As a result of such situations, many layers accumulate on the origins with the realization of many differentiations in history, changing the main motive and causing it to no longer have a connection with the origin.

In the same vein, within a lineage, it is challenging to determine what is an original member and what is an add-on component. In the branches of a family tree that show ancestors, the purposes for which each individual came together and differentiated to form other branches, the similarities that show on what grounds they attribute themselves to a lineage are rather vague. While some branches of the family tree grow and flourish, others wither and lose their connection with the entire lineage. It cannot be said directly which member of the family bears the qualifying characteristics of the lineage, and with each new marriage, the heredity, customs, and new ways of living of other lineages are transmitted within the family. A person who has no biological relationship with a particular family can join that family through adoption, whereas a person who is a natural member of the family can be eliminated from that family's genealogy for any reason.<sup>41</sup> Arbitrary, accidental, or forced encounters between descendants and accompanying out-of-wedlock children, adoptions, and inheritance

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<sup>39</sup> GM Preface §7.

<sup>40</sup> D §44.

<sup>41</sup> Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche Life as Literature* (Harvard University Press), 102.

by someone outside the family or a family member being subjected to disinheritance are constitutive elements of descent. To continue the examples, a lineage that was considered glorious and aristocratic in the past may have become tainted and infamous over time, or a pet may be included in that family's lineage. In this sense, it can be seen that in the lineage, where many independent elements congregate, there are ruptures, fragmentations, ignorance, modifications in function, and new unique clusters. It is impossible to find an absolute origin within this network of endless relationships and partnerships, but this does not mean that each lineage is equal to the other; one may be stronger and dominant, the other weaker and subordinate. Therefore, history is deeply complicated and diversified and is full of uncertainties. As Nietzsche says: "There is no telling what may yet become a part of history. Maybe the past is still essentially undiscovered."<sup>42</sup>

Nietzsche has been engaged in philological research and lecturing for many years, so his historical perspective on genealogy is directly related to his being a philologist. From the point of view of philological studies, it is crucial to examine the text in its originality, intact form from the signature bearer, the contexts of transmission, and the presence of possible alterations and interventions. Similar to the body in genealogy, the materiality of written documents also plays an essential role in philology; after all, the surviving pages of texts may be palimpsests on which other writings have been scribbled.<sup>43</sup> The text is a ground that is constantly reconsidered through historical changes and on which interpretations, shifts of meaning, and different perspectives are added and multiplied. Philological criticism investigates the text itself through quotations, sources, the ideas it is assembled from, lexical studies, and biographies. Moreover, it does not make an objective observation; on the contrary, it carries out a critical activity by reconstructing the text with corrections, interpretations, and redefinitions in every reading. To put it another way, texts are not neutral data free from interpretations; they already contain what is presented by an interpretation and the influence of the point of view on the analysand himself. Derrida's statement about the text is something that philological research is accustomed to: "The dissimulation of the woven texture can, in any case, take centuries to undo its web: a web that

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<sup>42</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, (Cambridge University Press, 2001), §34.

<sup>43</sup> Christian Benne, *Nietzsche und die historisch-kritische Philologie* (De Gruyter, 2012), 96.

envelops a web, undoing the web for centuries; reconstituting it too as an organism, indefinitely regenerating its own tissue behind the cutting trace, the decision of each reading.”<sup>44</sup> At certain times, a text disappears, is forgotten, is misinterpreted, is found meaningless, or undertakes a secondary task to understand other texts; afterward, all these relations are dissolved, and it becomes valuable, meaningful, and essential on new ground. In this sense, genealogy is itself an interpretation; it does not consider values in history as static given texts but as signifiers that acquire meaning through the combination of certain interpretations.<sup>45</sup>

The relationship between philology and genealogy can be seen in the etymology of moral concepts that Nietzsche discusses in the first analysis of the text. Nietzsche does not set a specific starting point in his research, and his etymological study does not provide an absolute definition; words are traced only up to a point and then interrupted. Both fictional texts and historical anecdotes accompany the philological study of semantics, while associations, analogies, similes, and metaphors are constantly at work. In this way, Nietzsche turns not to the concepts of morality themselves but to those who determine them, showing how they are used in history in whose hands and by which different purposes they are characterized. This reveals that values are not objective facts in history, that moral judgments do not have a positive content in themselves, and Nietzsche problematizes morality by showing that there are degenerate and life-degrading elements in the formation of values that are considered good:

Nobody has had the remotest doubt or hesitation in placing higher value on ‘the good man’ than on ‘the evil’, higher value in the sense of advancement, benefit and prosperity for man in general (and this includes man’s future). What if the opposite were true? What if a regressive trait lurked in ‘the good man’, likewise a danger, an enticement, a poison, a narcotic, so that the present lived at the expense of the future? Perhaps in more comfort and less danger, but also in a smaller-minded, meaner manner? So that morality itself were to blame if man, as species, never reached his highest potential power and splendour? So that morality itself was the danger of dangers?<sup>46</sup>

Since metaphysicians' filters for evaluating life divide life into hierarchical oppositions and value the supersensible and rational over-life, they fail to recognize the problems

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<sup>44</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Plato's Pharmacy in Dissemination*, trans. by Barbara Johnson, (The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 63.

<sup>45</sup> Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche Life as Literature*, 108.

<sup>46</sup> *GM Preface* §6.

created by morality itself. Thus, they ignored the essential elements and natural factors that are the source of values. In the metaphysician's conception, existing values are always determined in an intransitive and irreconcilable way: "The fundamental belief of metaphysicians is the belief in oppositions of values."<sup>47</sup> Therefore, metaphysical thought denies the possibility of one arising from the other and attributes different origins to them in order to prevent them from interfering with each other: "Metaphysical philosophy has hitherto surmounted this difficulty by denying that the one originates in the other and assuming for the more highly valued thing a miraculous source in the very kernel and being of the 'thing in itself.'"<sup>48</sup> What leads to and ensures this understanding is essentially a necessary consequence of logic and dialectical insight, which are themselves instruments of the moral point of view. However, the values positioned as opposites can be seen as elements that carry each other's characteristics in their origins, share each other's parts, and are, in essence, the same, contrary to the logical inference. As Nietzsche emphasized in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "It could even be possible that whatever gives value to those good and honorable things has an incriminating link, bond, or tie to the very things that look like their evil opposites; perhaps they are even essentially the same."<sup>49</sup> Nietzsche claims that the metaphysical mode of understanding is falsified by appealing to the philosophy of history and the natural sciences associated with it:

"Historical philosophy, on the other hand, which can no longer be separated from natural science, the youngest of all philosophical methods, has discovered in individual cases (and this will probably be the result in every case) that there are no opposites, except in the customary exaggeration of popular or metaphysical interpretations, and that a mistake in reasoning lies at the bottom of this antithesis."<sup>50</sup>

In this respect, from Nietzsche's point of view, there are no opposites in nature, only differences of degree and transitions, but because of their incomplete observations, moralists have not only considered nature in terms of opposites but have also continued this mistake and evaluated the inner structure and affections of human beings in terms of opposites, not degrees. Therefore, he eliminates qualitative contrasts and questions the way they are evaluated in quantitative transformations. Also, metaphysically based thought suggests that the determination of the function and purposes of a thing

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> HAH §1.

<sup>49</sup> BGE §2.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

corresponds to its *raison d'être*: "The eye was made to see, the hand to grasp."<sup>51</sup> However, it tells us nothing about what a thing does and what its functions are because all functions are incorporated into the thing afterward, and in this sense, it is a kind of interpretation. By pointing to the difference between the concept of punishment and its purposes, Nietzsche exemplifies how punishment has been handled in different ways throughout history. In this respect, whatever function is attributed to it in life - be it rational concepts or bodily organs - has all been constructed and acquired certain meanings under the prevailing of certain perspectives. Thereby, Nietzsche does not start from conceptual analysis but moves directly from the historical and prioritizes the individual and singular; moreover, he takes the agent who plays an active role in the transformation of values as the basis. The historical transformation of the concept is the result of its creative inversion by man, in the sense that values cannot be separated from the man who evaluates them. Thus, rather than man being a creature shaped by values, value is a product of a particular type of man's interpretation of life, his influences, and circumstances. Values in history do not have absolute origins, nor is there a single purpose that determines them from beginning to end; they are constantly being taken over by different institutions, structures, beliefs and moving in different directions:

Anything in existence, having somehow come about, is continually interpreted a new, requisitioned a new, transformed and redirected to a new purpose by a power superior to it; that everything that occurs in the organic world consists of overpowering, dominating, and in their turn, overpowering and dominating consist of re-interpretation, adjustment, in the process of which their former 'meaning' [Sinn] and 'purpose' must necessarily be obscured or completely obliterated.<sup>52</sup>

The concept of *Entstehung* (emergence) demonstrates how the struggle between these forces takes place and how relations of domination are established. At the same time, it seeks to determine how power arising from the struggle between forces expresses itself in a specific situation, the form of existence over that which it dominates. This also refers to the diversity of interpretations and multiplicity of meanings that indicate something. Practices of mutual subjugation, employed strategies, mechanisms of influence, and defensive actions change the configurations of forces: "The form is fluid, the 'meaning' [Sinn] even more so."<sup>53</sup> As Deleuze says, in order to know the

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<sup>51</sup> GM II §12.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

sense of something, we need to know the forces by which it is evaluated and appropriated.<sup>54</sup> The activity of appropriation manifests itself as an interpretation, but it is not done in a theoretical way; it never becomes a value independent of the interpreter. “*Entstehung* must delineate this interaction, the struggle these forces wage against each other or against adverse circumstances, and the attempt to avoid degeneration and regain strength by dividing these forces against themselves.”<sup>55</sup> The expression struggle should not be understood as equal terms, forces, or objectives; there is always a difference in degree. The fact that a value is perpetually reinterpreted, evaluated, and transformed by another force shows that values do not move on the plane of dichotomies as constructed by metaphysical thought. In this respect, a value has been endowed with many other purposes throughout history and has manifested itself as different forms of meaning in practices, customs, and actions. Values and practices are, therefore, not characterized, as one might think, by necessity relations, by rational justifications, and by purposes that are intrinsically linked to utilitarianism. Furthermore, for Nietzsche, the purpose of any practice in history that determines it is not given from the beginning, but rather the purpose is a later addition to the practice and an interpretation that orientates the practice towards other uses. As Nietzsche said: “the “purpose” usually comes into the mind only after everything has been prepared for its execution.”<sup>56</sup> However, Nietzsche does not reject the idea of purpose; he is against the idea of a purpose so absolute that it encompasses all of life. Moreover, Nietzsche focuses on the purposes attributed to a thing and its underlying motivations that it tries to mask and attempt to dominate and make space for itself in practice. All the institutions created by culture, the ways of welcoming death-birth-marriage, political activities, or scientific paradigm transformations that have emerged in tradition have all come about through the establishment of new hegemonies in this kind of struggle of forces. Since every relationship can only be realized in opposition and struggle, a compromise will never be reached in the end.

Nietzsche claims that the moral values that constitute Western cultural life are the result of the triumph of the herd morality of the past. He traces how moral concepts develop and transform through two different human types: the master/noble and the

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<sup>54</sup> NP, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Foucault, op. cit., 84.

<sup>56</sup> WP §671.

slave/herd. Slaves develop moral values as a disciplinary and obedience strategy to control drives by undermining the values held by masters and justifying themselves vis-à-vis masters, thereby affirming their own position. Whereas the values of the masters were previously concerned only with themselves, the slaves, in order to find a response to their suffering, to take their revenge on the masters and not be annihilated in front of them, presented their own assessment of life as if it were the truth and objective fact in life. In this way, the slaves made the nobles accept that their values were bad and harmful, and as a result, they adopted the value system of the slaves. Furthermore, slaves presented their psychological and physiological powerlessness as an essential virtue, helplessness as goodness, fear as obedience, and weakness as harmlessness.<sup>57</sup> The slave is in a state of reactive existence towards life by establishing a relationship of negation with his surroundings. It is a fact that he does not know how to forget and overcome what he has experienced because of a kind of grudge with a sense of revenge and the weakness of his drives. However, they have succeeded in infecting the masters with their own diseased conception of life and have led to the corruption of their own drives. The slaves triumphed over the nobles as a result of their creative use of the psychology of resentment they harbored due to their impotence. Following these stages, the only valid and dominant type of morality in history became the herd morality produced by the slave type. In this sense, Nietzsche tries to show that existing moral values are not the necessary consequences of logical judgments but are, in fact, of immoral origin, a method used in the past by people of weak character to subjugate the powerful to their rule.

However, does it demonstrate that the origins of moral values contain immoral and degenerate elements by themselves and provide a sufficient condition for rejecting them? Looking at the history of any value, it can be seen that the conditions that led to its acceptance legitimized it through tyranny and oppression. However, when a value in its present form does not have the elements of its origin and is rejected only with reference to its origin, this means that a genetic fallacy has been made. In other words, to point only to impure origins is to make no distinction between the origin and its present practice, as the English moralists did when they legitimized values by reference to the sublime origin. Nietzsche is aware of that problem, and after all, as he

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<sup>57</sup> GM I §14.

says: “A morality could even have grown out of an error, and the realization of this fact would not as much as touch the problem of its value.”<sup>58</sup> Moreover, what is called degenerate origins and devalued is itself subject to evaluation, and it is not possible to approach the past with an impartial and objective view. In this sense, genealogy not only serves a descriptive function but is itself evaluative.<sup>59</sup> If Nietzsche himself approaches values with an evaluation, does he not himself fall into the understanding he criticizes? These determinations about the origins of values show that values in history do not follow rational logic. The degenerate origin breaks down rationally established necessary relations and claims that the elements that enable their change are contingently occurring within the framework of natural factors. Indicating the conditions under which value is produced does not override them but problematizes them for the 'present.' By demonstrating that such weaknesses, inability, and evils stand at the root of moral virtues, Nietzsche signifies both the contingent character of values and the possibility of being otherwise. In that case, he criticizes moral values not only by discrediting them but also by their opposition to life, by the fact that they do not enrich life, and brings up the requirement for new values. As David Owen says:

Nietzsche has a principled reason to offer them in this order, namely, that the first essay, by presenting “morality” as slave morality, as a counter-movement to, and re-evaluation of, noble morality, immediately and dramatically problematizes the presumption of his audience that “morality” is the only possible ethical perspective in making visible another mode of ethical reasoning and rhetorically situating the reader within the struggle between them, while also indicating that the enterprise of re-evaluation to which he enjoins his readers is not a novel phenomenon.<sup>60</sup>

If values are other evaluated values or interpreted interpretations in history, then creative evaluation is only possible through a re-evaluation of old values. In this context, philosophical thought, in turn, initially inherited the grounds for the manner in which it relates to life from the ascetic evaluative practices that preceded it: “We could even say that it was only on the leading-rein of this ideal that philosophy ever learnt to take its first toddler steps on earth.”<sup>61</sup> Thereby, just as philosophy can only survive by embracing ascetic ideals through metaphysical thought, "a force would not survive if it did not, first of all, borrow the feature of the forces with which it

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<sup>58</sup> GS §345.

<sup>59</sup> Robert C. Solomon, *Living with Nietzsche: what the great "immoralist" has to teach us*, (Oxford University Press, 2003), 56.

<sup>60</sup> David Owen, *Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality*, (Acumen, 2007), 131-2.

<sup>61</sup> GM III §9.

struggles."<sup>62</sup> However, philosophy itself did not remove the mask of ascetic values that it had taken over but rather reinforced and perpetuated it. In this respect, genealogy undertakes the task of deciphering overlapping interpretations, revealing the masks adopted and the ways in which they are used, tearing them off, and preparing them for other purposes. Nevertheless, this does not correspond to a dialectical process, it does not lead to a better and more developed situation, it depends entirely on the evaluation practices of the forces, and there is no purposefulness, no mechanism for determining relations, which predetermines the direction in which they will move. At this point, we must ask why appropriation is a necessary process and why no value can be created from the ahistorical zero point. The fact that every value-setter realizes values by overcoming the other forces with which it is associated shows that there is nothing independent of relations, as we have seen in genealogy. The ground of evaluation is necessary to make life meaningful and justify it. Nevertheless, whether this is realized through active forces or in a reactive way remains a question. To answer this question, it is necessary to examine Nietzsche's understanding of psychology and physiology, which are an important layer directly related to his genealogical research.

In summary, through genealogy, Nietzsche offered the possibility of thinking in a new, non-metaphysical way instead of philosophy, which is the search for the origins behind the visible that determine it. Investigating morality through the lens of genealogy with direct targeting of morality will help to understand how values are evaluated and how re-evaluations occur. The values that impose themselves as absolute truths have been made open to questioning by moving them into the field of interpretations and have been made part of the system of indicators related to the body. In this respect, the method of genealogy brings the sublime and transcendent values down to earth and observes how they are related to the ordinary, commonplace drives and psychological needs of human beings and how they are transformed in history by being hidden behind masks and reinterpreted. All morality appears not primarily as a set of transcendent values guiding life but as a kind of compulsion, a deceptive disguise, a distortion, an attempt to legitimize the triumph of weakness. In this sense, genealogies have the function of 1) historicizing and 2) making values contingent, as well as 3) unmasking transcendental phenomena, thereby exposing them (the shameful origin '*O pudenda*

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<sup>62</sup> NP, 5.

*origo*') and 4) destabilizing them by pointing to the danger of their opposition to life, and 5) re-evaluating values within the opportunity they create. The philosophical questioning of values is now subject to scrutiny in a personal sphere based on the typology of the people who produce them. This means taking into account the motives and emotions around which values are evaluated during human encounters in the world. Consequently, since the psychological layer emerged together with physiology, especially in terms of the interrelation of forces, the field of research moves into a new naturalized philosophical framework.

### 2.3. Naturalization Project

Nietzsche's use of genealogy to criticize the rationally based values in the service of metaphysics that determine the stage of history is part of a wider project of naturalization along with psychology and physiology.<sup>63</sup> In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche sets the new task of thinking about human beings as reinterpreting them in terms of the natural, in the sense of purifying man from any supernatural determination. The metaphysicians' attempt to make sense of life through opposing values for the sake of discovering absolute truth and imposing their own moral position has become invalid when tested by history and life. In this respect, Nietzsche aims to develop a basic approach that will ensure that the human phenomenon is not considered separately from the rest of nature and can be understood correctly without ignoring its cultural-social-psychological dimensions:

To translate humanity back into nature; to gain control of the many vain and fanciful interpretations and incidental meanings that have been scribbled and drawn over that eternal basic text of homo natura so far; to make sure that, from now on, the human being will stand before the human being, just as he already stands before the rest of nature today, hardened by the discipline of science, – with courageous Oedipus eyes and sealed up Odysseus ears, deaf to the lures of the old metaphysical bird catchers who have been whistling to him for far too long: “You are more! You are higher! You have a different origin!”<sup>64</sup>

The naturalization project, broadly speaking, intends to explore how human nature, as a biological and psychological creature with a body and living in history, has had an impact on the traditions, institutions, values, and ideas we hold and produce. Questions

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<sup>63</sup> Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy*, (Princeton University Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>64</sup> BGE, §230.

such as whether we can understand human beings in the same way as we try to understand events in nature and non-human species or whether human lifestyles, cultural phenomena, and moral judgments can be considered in relation to the physical factors, motives, desires, and affections surrounding human beings express the basic approaches of the naturalist perspective. In this respect, Nietzsche argues that our explanatory models of human beings should be considered in conjunction with the approaches of the natural sciences and that human beings do not have an autonomy distinct from the natural. However, Nietzsche's project of translating human beings back to nature does not imply a biological reductionism or a substantive naturalism in which reality is established only in physical interactions or a methodological naturalism that is reduced only to the tools and settled laws of natural science. The naturalness of human existence includes not only the embodied being affected by the interactions of nature but also cultural phenomena, institutions, social relations, meanings, and signs:

If Nietzsche's causal explanations of our moral values are naturalistic, they are so in a sense which includes within the 'natural' not merely the psychophysical constitution of the individual whose values are up for explanation, but also many complex cultural phenomena and the psychophysical states of past individuals and projected types of individual.<sup>65</sup>

In the classical metaphysical tradition, human beings are generally defined in terms of supersensory properties such as the soul, which is in a separate and superior position to other living beings. In the transformation of man into a moral being lies this kind of sublimation and the idea that we are virtuous creatures on a transcendent ground. However, the rational-moral interpretations accumulated on the eternal text of human beings as a historical and evolutionary species in no way abrogate their natural existence. The philosopher's task is to pursue the interpretations that treat human beings morally, to reach their pre-moral foundations, and, in this respect, to show the invalidity of the moral.<sup>66</sup> In other words, Nietzsche opposes the determination of man by reference to a divine origin and the idea of essence and places him back among the animals, but this is not to consider the human being is a perfected final step in the process of evolution or the forced product of a hidden design, as Darwin tried to show

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<sup>65</sup> Christopher Janaway, *Beyond Selflessness: Reading Nietzsche's Genealogy* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 52-53.

<sup>66</sup> Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Task: an Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil*, (Yale University Press, 2001), 230.

in his idea of evolution; moreover, for Nietzsche, every creature is in the same phase of perfection with the human being.<sup>67</sup> However, in this case, to return to nature is not to design life by exploiting its animality but to contemplate its own transcendental potential from its own embodiment. He attempts to place the human being, which philosophy has dealt with in the metaphysical framework as supersensible, back into life and to explain it in terms of the world we experience in the state of becoming. This is an expression of the fact that human beings are also in a state of becoming and an indication that they are pregnant with further transformations. Therefore, considering what is 'human, all too human' is to make explicit how our embodied being, the characteristic center of the reality of human existence, is determined by the forms of our earthly relations. Nevertheless, this is not to exclude the noumenal realm in the Kantian sense and make inferences only about the phenomenal realm; moreover, there is neither the phenomenal nor noumenal realm. Naturalism, in the Nietzschean sense, takes into attention empirically tested knowledge and data obtained by scientific methods based on observation and experimentation; however, it is not concerned with the knowledge itself, per se, but with what the possession of this knowledge says about ourselves and our relation to the world.

Additionally, Nietzsche's conception of nature is not mechanically determined, as the sciences assume, dominated by fixed and unchanging laws of cause and effect. The mechanical conception of nature seeks uniformity, equality, and universality in everything it observes, which excludes the development of nature in terms of becoming and imposes lawfulness from the outside. Furthermore, the mechanistic view of the world, conditioned by the materialist conception of nature, is a view without any ambiguity or hierarchy, reduced to the categories of the human mind and left to the calculations and measures of mathematics and arithmetic. Nietzsche states that concepts such as matter, atom, and gravity, which the mechanistic theory attributes to nature, are interpretations of human psychological fiction and are not "facts in themselves."<sup>68</sup> The arguments presented by mechanistic thought within the framework of the mentioned concepts are a semiotic interpretation of the results of a realized

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<sup>67</sup> A §14.

<sup>68</sup> WP §689.

situation.<sup>69</sup> Nietzsche primarily describes this 'scientific' interpretation as a lack of taste in thought and argues that the mechanistic worldview deprives life of meaning:

But an essentially mechanistic world would be an essentially meaningless world! Suppose one judged the value of a piece of music according to how much of it could be counted, calculated, and expressed in formulas -how absurd such a 'scientific' evaluation of music would be! What would one have comprehended, understood, recognized? Nothing, really nothing of what is 'music' in it!<sup>70</sup>

As can be understood from the quoted passage, from the point of view of Nietzsche, nature is not in a category that can be reduced to any quantity, and besides, the natural also includes cultural-social components that have signs at the semantic dimension. Put another way, Nietzsche centers on the life in which we live, breathe, and experience. On the other hand, an organically existing nature, as conceived by the Hegelians, is also out of the question here. The nature understood organically contains a metaphysical purpose, a progression from disorder to order, a structure predetermined by rationality. Nietzsche warns us against projecting the world as an organic living being with a teleology, against imagining the universe as a machine and assuming that the rules that are valid on earth can also be applied to the whole universe, against the belief that there are laws to be discovered in nature.<sup>71</sup> For Nietzsche, there is no predetermined purpose either at the level of conscious organic beings or in natural phenomena. Moreover, even the functions that we think organs have do not have a meaning in themselves; they all lack this purposefulness, and they are based on the values that people culturally and historically ascribe to them:

The impartial investigator who pursues the history of the eye and the forms it has assumed among the lowest creatures, who demonstrates the whole step-by-step evolution of the eye, must arrive at the great conclusion that vision was not the intention behind the creation of the eye, but that vision appeared, rather, after chance had put the apparatus together.<sup>72</sup>

The search for regularity shaped by the cause-and-effect relations we establish while studying nature are judgments that our reason inherently reflects nature through its mirror,<sup>73</sup> and such relations are valid only at the rational level, and in this way, we do not encounter nature but only our own criteria. Hence, there is no absolute purpose in

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> GS §373.

<sup>71</sup> GS §109.

<sup>72</sup> D §122.

<sup>73</sup> D §121.

life that exists on its own and shapes life; instead, purposes dominated by many different forces compete and struggle with each other through coincidental encounters. This means that we can only understand nature not on transcendental rational grounds but by trying to read the signs that manifest themselves at the level of interpretation.

According to Nietzsche, the attempts of physicists to explain nature in terms of transcendental categories and laws, just as metaphysicians do, result from a bad philological activity of reading nature as if it were a given text, whereas their scientific explanations only an interpretation and, even more, an interpretation that has already been interpreted (subjected to metaphysical evaluation).<sup>74</sup> As we can understand from the expression "the eternal basic text of homo natura," Nietzsche treats 'natura' philologically again, as we have seen for genealogy, and points to an infinitely diverse coexistence in which there can be many arguments that determine and exclude each other, open to many different interpretations and perspectives that cannot be grasped causally in terms of being a text. In this sense, as in a text, there is a multi-meaningful, multi-valued, and multi-layered structure full of interventions, inconsistencies, and distorted judgments in nature; moreover, nature itself is a semiotic search for meaning. In other words, nature speaks to us in a hierographic way through the expression of semiotic networks and the transformational games of signifiers. As Schelling said:

"Nature is like some very ancient author whose message is written in hieroglyphics on colossal pages, as the Artist says in Goethe's poem. Even those who investigate nature only empirically need to know her language in order to understand utterances which have become unintelligible to us. The same is true of philology in the higher sense of the term. The earth is a book made up of miscellaneous fragments dating from very different ages. Each mineral is a real philological problem."<sup>75</sup>

In this regard, the philological study of nature should both reveal interpretive forces and undertake the task of addressing nature from a critical perspective by intervening in the text, as every interpreter does. Interpretations are not equal and universalizable like the laws of nature; they always take into account differences in degree and multiple meanings. Thereby, he envisages a nature in which there is no 'things-in-itself' such as constant facts and laws in the natural sciences in the manner set by metaphysics, but a nature that is divided into layers in the chaos of anti-causal and

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<sup>74</sup> BGE §22.

<sup>75</sup> F.W.J. Schelling, *Prerequisites to University Studies* in *On University Studies*, Translated by E. S. Morgan Edited by Norbert Guterman, (Ohio University Press, 1966), 40.

anti-teleological force dynamics, where different formations and reshaping occur at every moment.

Starting from this point of view, to make nature comprehensible, first, the understanding of nature through the sciences, which are under the tutelage of metaphysics, must itself be naturalized. Although the approaches of the natural sciences to nature try not to resort to metaphysical explanations, they proceed from a certain ground that encodes life as moral. The sciences, continuing the theological explanations, distinguished between the apparent world and the real world in which there are laws that determine the apparent world, and in this way, they have a de-naturalized nature. Nietzsche uses de-naturalized and anti-nature synonymously and comprehends that as the starting point for the invention of a sacred divine world.<sup>76</sup> In this sense, the call for naturalization means that it is a demand to eliminate the division created by metaphysics: “When will we have completely de-deified nature? When may we begin to naturalize humanity with a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature?”<sup>77</sup> A deified nature means a nature brought in line, tamed, and perverted by morality, and in this way, people are deprived of the instinctive nature they possess. The key to a natural understanding of both nature itself and the human being as a part of nature is to rethink it in a non-moral way in this context.

On the other hand, the naturalization of man and nature is not a return to nature as envisaged by the German romantics or a preference for a Hobbesian state of nature. Nature itself is amoral, and Nietzsche's call is to become amoral like nature; therefore, nature is a state to be reached/achieved, not a place to return to the pre-cultural times of man:

“-Not "return to nature"- for there has never yet been a natural humanity. The scholasticism of un- and antinatural values is the rule, is the beginning; man reaches nature only after a long struggle-he never "returns"- Nature: i.e., daring to be immoral like nature [...] we conceive all being-great as a placing-oneself-outside as far as morality is concerned.”<sup>78</sup>

Nietzsche also argues that nature must be purified from anthropomorphist interpretations. Nature has been seen in the history of thought as morally opposed to

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<sup>76</sup> WP §586.

<sup>77</sup> GS §109.

<sup>78</sup> WP §120.

culture, as a place of deception, cruelty, ambiguity, as the temple of the devil, to use the language of Christian theology, and as something inferior and to be seized: “Once the concept “Nature” was invented as a counter-concept to “God,” “natural” had to become the word for “reprehensible” - that whole fictional world had its roots in hatred for the natural ( for reality! ), it is the expression of a deep discontent with the actual.”<sup>79</sup> In this sense, nature has been turned into an error that must always be corrected in the face of truth, a place where all kinds of dispositions are permissible. This situation is an indication of man's imposition of his own understanding of nature and his desire to dominate nature: “To "humanize" the world, i.e., to feel ourselves more and more masters within it.”<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, there are philosophers like the Stoics who talk about living in accordance with nature, and Nietzsche regards these thinkers as people who want to see their own images in nature and dictate their own moral ideas to nature.<sup>81</sup> All these designs are the expectations from nature formed by the psychophysiological states of human beings combined with moral and theological teachings. In this way, Nietzsche labels his position on moralistic naturalism as a way of both liberating nature from the designs that humans ascribe to it and naturalizing human beings by freeing them from their moral determinations:

“Moralistic naturalism: the tracing back of apparently emancipated, supernatural moral values to their "nature": i.e., to natural immorality, to natural "utility," etc. I might designate the tendency of these reflections as moralistic naturalism: my task is to translate the apparently emancipated and denatured moral values back into their nature-i.e., into their natural "immorality.”<sup>82</sup>

Just as the contribution of Kant's critique of pure reason is, as Heidegger says, to determine what belongs to man and what to nature<sup>83</sup>, so the contribution of Nietzsche's understanding of naturalization is to determine what belongs to man and what to morality. However, even though Kant meticulously tried to determine what belongs to nature in his critique, he still based the elements that belong to human beings on the supersensible by excluding the body. In this respect, the project of naturalization is an attempt to create a place for the historical, the embodied, and the finite beyond the frameworks conditioned by moral assumptions. On the grounds of this idea, there is a

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<sup>79</sup> A §15.

<sup>80</sup> WP §614.

<sup>81</sup> BGE §9.

<sup>82</sup> WP, §299.

<sup>83</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being And Time* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 9.

reinterpretation of life as a will to power, which is the play of forces striving for dominance over each other and putting forward the relations of perspectives against the claims of objective truth.

#### **2.4. Psychology and Physiology**

At the center of Nietzsche's genealogical work are psychology and physiology, which serve to understand how values are produced and for what reasons they are successful. Nietzsche many times presented himself as a psychologist and declared that a psychologist is always at work in his work: "That out of my writings a psychologist without equal speaks."<sup>84</sup> He even says that he was the first psychologist and that there was no psychology before him.: "Who before me among philosophers in general, has been a psychologist and not on the contrary its opposite, a "higher swindler," an "idealist"? Before me there was absolutely no psychology."<sup>85</sup> He also describes his examination of the genealogy of morality as "studies by a psychologist for a reevaluation of all values."<sup>86</sup> However, Nietzsche's psychological understanding is different from psychology as an existing science. Hitherto, psychology has not attempted to explain human nature and behavior but has merely functioned as an auxiliary apparatus for the rational justification and legitimation of existing moral values. Therefore, psychology itself, as with all other sciences, is a field of inquiry already framed by moral and metaphysical values. As Nietzsche recognized: "All psychology so far has been stuck in moral prejudices and fears: it has not ventured into the depths."<sup>87</sup> Psychology has morally distorted the possibilities of self-recognition and the reasons for forms of self-expression, thus paving the way for people to become alienated from themselves. In this context, Nietzsche puts forward that psychology should be repositioned as the queen of the sciences, and the other sciences should be considered as serving and complementary to it, and "psychology is again the path to the fundamental problems."<sup>88</sup> The expression that psychology is once again the queen of the sciences is reminiscent of Kant's expression for metaphysics in the Critique of

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<sup>84</sup> EH, *Why I Write Such Good Books*, § 5.

<sup>85</sup> EH, *Why I am Destiny*, § 6.

<sup>86</sup> EH, *Genealogy of Morals*, 82.

<sup>87</sup> BGE, §23.

<sup>88</sup> BGE §23.

Pure Reason.<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, Nietzsche does not aim to replace metaphysics with psychology; in this respect, the fundamental questions of psychology have nothing to do with the questions within the metaphysical thought that has been formulated since Plato but rather include questions that will lead to a new way of perceiving and affirming life and to becoming oneself and realizing one's own capacities and possibilities. The way to do this is, primarily, to investigate through psychology how the old values were established and how they corrupt human beings, to diagnose which situations lead to this, and by this means to create an opportunity for new values that will cure the diseased human being.

Nietzsche's understanding of psychology was founded against the psychology of the priests, which was shaped by the moral principles of Christianity. The sovereignty of moral values has always been possible by having control and surveillance over feelings and drives by taming and regulating them. In Christian morality, for an action to be praiseworthy and become an absolute imperative, it must be motivated by unselfish drives. In this sense, natural human drives such as sexuality, violence, and greed are condemned and forbidden by associating them with selfishness. Indeed, the drives and feelings of human beings are not moral in themselves; states such as compassion or selfishness do not have a given positive or negative content; they are contingent, they have been treated in different ways in history; however, in the hands of priests they take on a moral dimension by being reinterpreted with the categories of virtue in the Christian tradition.<sup>90</sup> The priest transforms feelings into a motive for the moral fulfillment of an action or a condition for the reaction to an event. To control actions, they reorientate certain feelings and drives, causing them to be suppressed or sublimated. In this way, moral values create mechanisms of self-control and self-discipline in social and cultural life that make people responsible and blameworthy for the actions they take and the emotions they feel. Thereby, people are ashamed of their feelings, curse them, and suppress them, preventing their development and manifestation. Priests have formed the type of herd man by bringing together weak and powerless people through the ascetic virtues of Christianity around the idea of God, that is, a faith in which everyone is made equal and in which principles valid for

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<sup>89</sup> Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and Edit. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. (Cambridge University Press, 1998.), 99.

<sup>90</sup> D §38.

everyone are imposed. Because they are great psychologists, they have been able to teach the herd person, who is suffering in life and trying to find meaning in life, to affirm his relationship with life through his own weakness and to mask his own powerlessness, and thereby succeed in wounding and healing him. The ascetic priest directs the resentment that arises as a result of the psychological instincts of the herd people, divides life in a moral way, and convinces the herd people that the world they live in is a place full of suffering and that they must suffer through the fiction of an afterlife without poverty and pain: "The priests, in so far as they are psychologists, have never discovered anything more interesting than to sniff at the secrets of their adversaries-they demonstrate their Christianity by looking about the "world" for filth."<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, the ascetic priest claims to heal the herd man by teaching him through the concepts of crime, sin, and punishment that he must humiliate his body, desires, and passions, but in this way, he makes him sicker:

Ignorance in psychologists -the Christian has no nervous system-; contempt for, and a deliberate desire to disregard the demands of the body, the discovery of the body; the presupposition that this is in accordance with the higher nature of man, that it must necessarily be good for the soul; the systematic reduction of all bodily feelings to moral values; illness itself conceived as morally conditioned, perhaps as punishment or as testing or also as a state of salvation in which man becomes more perfect than he could be if he were healthy (-Pascal's idea); under certain circumstances, making oneself sick deliberately.<sup>92</sup>

From Nietzsche's point of view, the existing understanding of psychology has been unaware of the psychological transformations realized by the priests and has conducted research within the limits set by their moral values. As morality, psychology has tried to define universal laws applicable to all human beings and has resorted to the objective criteria of the scientific method, which disregards the personal. It did not analyze human actions in terms of their instincts, drives, and affections but in terms of the moral intentions and purposes of the actions and thus concealed the real causes. Nietzsche argues that the source of moral thoughts and values lies in the inner nature of human beings, and therefore, understanding moral problems requires an understanding of human physiological reality.

Nietzsche returns to the idea of the body and develops a new psychological understanding that focuses on the forces and drives at the physiological level. He

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<sup>91</sup> WP §386.

<sup>92</sup> WP §227.

explains the nature of the new psychological approach as follows: “To grasp psychology as morphology and the doctrine of the development of the will to power.”<sup>93</sup> Thinking through psychology is a prerequisite for mapping value-based thinking and considering values in terms of the conditions under which the person who holds them creates them. As Heidegger put it: “To reckon psychologically means to appraise everything on the basis of value and to calculate value on the basis of the fundamental value, will to power-to figure how and to what extent "values" can be evaluated in accord with will to power and so prove valid.”<sup>94</sup> Thus, Nietzsche goes beyond metaphysical thought by repositioning the body on the plane of immanence in relation to his doctrine of the will to power. For Nietzsche, the idea of the body is the most secret, the newest and the most astonishing thing that is unknown what it can do and what forces make it up:

In fact, what is more astonishing is the body: there is no end to one's admiration for how the human body has become possible; how such a prodigious alliance of living beings, each dependent and subservient and yet in a certain sense also commanding and acting out of its own will, can live, grow, and for a while prevail, as a whole - and we can see this does not occur due to consciousness!<sup>95</sup>

However, Nietzsche's return to the idea of the body is not to reduce human intellectual activities to the body and treat them as a side effect, but rather to try to comprehend them by considering as a body: “Perhaps the entire evolution of the spirit is a question of the body; it is the history of the development of a higher body that emerges into our sensibility.”<sup>96</sup> Moreover, it is to attempt to make sense of the conscious processes such as aims, values, and thoughts that construct and shape life as a sign language of the unconscious activities in the body that lie behind them.<sup>97</sup> In this respect, Nietzsche re-problematizes the relations of life throughout the course of existence in terms of the role and position of the body. He asserts that all forms of philosophizing in the history of thought and the problems they have caused are the result of a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the body.<sup>98</sup> Existing psychology has evaluated the body from a

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<sup>93</sup> BGE §23.

<sup>94</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Vol. IV: Nihilism*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Joan Stambaugh, Ed. And Trans. (Harper & Row, 1982), 48.

<sup>95</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Writing from the Late Notebook*, Trans. by Kate Sturge and Ed. by Rudiger Bittner, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), Notebook 37 June - July 1885, 37 [4].

<sup>96</sup> WP §676.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> GS Preface §2.

moral point of view and has examined human beings in the light of the validity of moral judgments. Thereby, in psychology, just as moral judgment conceives of life, the body is always secondary, inferior, and unpredictable. Nietzsche turned the moral point of view inside out and made the body the subject of thought and based thinking with the body and embodied thought. And what is the body? It is by no means a given, complete, ready-made thing, equipped with unchanging structures that produce the same effects repeatedly. As Klossowski points out: “The body is a product of chance; it is nothing but the locus where a group of individuated impulses confront each other so as to produce this interval that constitutes a human life, impulses whose sole ambition is to de-individuate themselves.”<sup>99</sup> The body is, in a sense, the place where physiological, psychological, and historical forces meet and emerge. Therefore, the body is located opposite the realm of rationality and constitutes the intersection of the first nature (physiological and psychological nature) and the second nature (historical-cultural nature), which is formed by acting on the body. If the human being is to be understood in a comprehensive and all-encompassing way, it is necessary primarily to deal with him in terms of his first nature and to consider the effects of the secondary nature, which rests upon it, only in terms of its relation to the first. Rational causes are often attached to a particular attitude only after the fact. Deeper down, we find mechanisms that lead to the habituation of an attitude, where there are no causes but psycho-physiological layers and conflicts of motives and drives. The question that needs to be clarified is how the two categories of the body (physiology and psychology) are to be considered together, and the way to resolve this is to treat them as mutually explanatory models. The physiological layer is made intelligible by psychology, and psychology cannot be explained without physiological elements.

Nietzsche asks us to imagine a state of being in which we have no organs other than our passions as a means of comprehending life and to question whether a situation in which there is no reality other than what our instincts and feelings present to us would be sufficient to understand the world we live in.<sup>100</sup> Nietzsche agrees with that and considers such an approach to be not only necessary but essential for the project of naturalization. Everything from human ideas to high moral virtues to chemical

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<sup>99</sup> Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. By Daniel W. Smith, (The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 26.

<sup>100</sup> BGE §36.

reactions in the body manifests itself “as a kind of life of the drives, where all the organic functions (self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, excretion, and metabolism) are still synthetically bound together.”<sup>101</sup> Thus, most of the processes that shape our lives are the work of unconscious activities. Even the categories and rational designs we have are explained in relation to drives: “Thinking is only a relation between these drives.”<sup>102</sup> In this sense, the activity of thinking does not take place on an autonomous supersensory ground; it is directly immanent in human drives. Additionally, Nietzsche says that drives try to philosophize, that is, the positioning of drives in a certain hierarchy and their becoming the prevailing force directs the most personal decisions and ways of thinking in the life of the person who possesses those drives.<sup>103</sup>

In this regard, it is necessary to clarify what drive is. Drives exist as fundamental forces that motivate all of life by ensuring our relationality, and in this sense, they are directly related to values. Values appear as destinations that are guided by drives and respond to their needs. In this sense, value is embedded in the drives, but the existence of the drive has neither a conscious unity nor a temporal autonomy of its own from the present; furthermore, the drives are related to a historically transmitted experience of cultures. They are not only physiological but also include psychological dimensions. In all our relations with our environment, drives push us to create or destroy lead us to what is to be loved or hated; in other words, they are the source of all our creativity, passions, and desires. Drives have the flexibility to produce different types of behavior according to the circumstances they encounter and to reach the same outcome that will feed their orientation. Katsafanas suggests that there are four fundamental characteristics of drive: “(i) they are dispositions that generate affective orientations; (ii) they admit an aim/object distinction; (iii) they dispose agents to seek their aims, rather than their objects; and (iv) they are constant.”<sup>104</sup> Drives determine what a person should orientate towards in his environment and what can be brought to his attention. In other words, the predominance of drives modifies the expectation of the agent towards his/her environment. Life becomes intelligible from the standpoint of the agent's drive and is transformed into elements that fulfill this drive. While drives

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> BGE §6.

<sup>104</sup> Paul Katsafanas, *Value, Affect, Drive*, in Peter Kail and Manuel Dries (eds.), *Nietzsche on Mind and Nature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 165.

transform one's thoughts and perception, they also shape how one interacts with others. In this respect, it is similar to the fact that the content and form in which a question is asked predetermine what will be an answer to it and what will be irrelevant to it. Every drive seeks actions that will keep the tension at its peak and make itself efficient for the purpose of releasing its power. A person who has an aggressive drive tries to look for stimuli around him that will push him to this aggressive activity. Thereby, drivers look for objects to express themselves or try to create spaces to do so. Furthermore, they try to realize their aims in the things they encounter, but this does not show that their objects have an essential position; on the contrary, objects are temporary and accidental, and the main point is to provide the expression of the aim. It is this aim of drives that identifies their existential character and distinguishes them from each other. A drive produces values by interpreting life from the perspective of its self-actualizing aim. In all drives lies an appreciation of value, only assimilated in this way; moreover, every drive is cultivated as a temporary condition of existence.<sup>105</sup> Drives are reorganized through the legitimacy of values and thus gain a sense of justified rightness and have the possibility of self-realization.

In every action, multiple drives are at work at the same time and operate within a certain economic oscillation. When an action is taking place, there are drivers: “1) the one that finds satisfaction in doing 2) the one that finds satisfaction in setting end and means 3) the one that finds satisfaction in anticipating success.”<sup>106</sup> Drives are in a struggle with each other with the purpose of subjugating other drives and to self-represent the way of perceiving life: “Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm.”<sup>107</sup> Thus, one drive is strengthened, and the other is weakened. Weak drives that are suppressed and subjugated by the other do not disappear but try to merge with it, subject to the interpretation of the dominant drive. The weaker drives, which fail in the struggle, have a tendency towards unification and integration, whereas the stronger ones always watch out for distinctions and try to push them away from themselves because their differences are tried to be prevented and rotted from within by the weaker

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<sup>105</sup>Nietzsche, eKGWB/NF-1884, *Nachgelassene Fragmente Sommer–Herbst 1884*. 26 [72]

<sup>106</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unpublished Fragments from the Period of Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Summer 1882–Winter 1883/84)*, Translated by Paul S. Loeb and David F Tinsley (Stanford University Press, 2019) 7 [263].

<sup>107</sup> WP §481.

drives.<sup>108</sup> Nietzsche argued that impulses, drives, and instincts, though different, were all part of the same basic actuality - the will to power. Thus, he comprehended them as constitutive agents, which are different manifestations of the same basic force. Instincts, drives, and feelings are in themselves capable of interpretation, of considering things important or not, of valorizing or devaluing them, and of constructing a certain way of life:

Most of a philosopher's conscious thought is secretly directed and forced into determinate channels by the instincts. Even behind all logic and its autocratic posturings stand valuations or, stated more clearly, physiological requirements for the preservation of a particular type of life. For example, that the determinate is worth more than the indeterminate, appearance worth less than the "truth."<sup>109</sup>

Every relationship we have with life and our environment is a manifestation of the existence of drives in search of a target. Even when we try to suppress or discipline one drive, what is, in fact, at work is the desire of another drive to spread, occupy, prevail, and monopolize. However, this is not only an individual psycho-physiological condition. The drives become established because of historical collective practices as well as individual ones, so we have many drives that are inherited and transmitted. In certain epochs, the drive for truth is dominant; in others, the drive for art or the drive for mythological belief. With the drive for truth, a period is socially marked by the principle of not deceiving oneself and not living in lies, and thus, human beings begin to perceive the world within this framework; moreover, the drive for truth is transferred to nature, and the belief that nature must be honest with itself is produced.<sup>110</sup> In this sense, it is the activities of the drives that produce transcendental values and are, in the end, left alone with their destruction. The most fundamental point in terms of the expression and activity of the drives is that they constitute the conditions for our metaphysical conceptualizations and moral virtues:

All virtues physiological conditions: particularly the principal organic functions considered as necessary, as good. All virtues are really refined passions and enhanced states. Pity and love of mankind as development of the sexual drive. Justice as development of the drive to revenge. Virtue as pleasure in resistance, will to power. Honor as recognition of the similar and equal-in-power.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> WP §655.

<sup>109</sup> BGE §3.

<sup>110</sup> Nietzsche, eKGWB/NF-1872,19[229] — Nachgelassene Fragmente Sommer 1872 — Anfang 1873. [http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1872,19\[229\]](http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1872,19[229])

<sup>111</sup> WP §255.

All evaluations that do not serve life, that do not always ensure its continuity and affirmation, are at their root a manifestation of the hegemony of corrupt instincts. In this sense, Nietzsche tends to overcome the degenerate drives that have taken root in the world of human life and to transform them in such a way that they will develop and prosper to the extent that they will affirm life. However, it is not only the weak and bad drives that are in question but also the good drives that must be defeated and reconsecrated because even they have already grown up under the yoke of moral drives.<sup>112</sup> Nietzsche not only changes the ground of the questions that philosophers have made the subject of research but also discovers new forms of inquiry by seeing the questions they put forward as symptoms of the body and by dealing with the motives that give rise to these questions. What is the drive that leads a philosopher to evaluate life in this way, and by what force is he possessed? Is it his health or his weakness that drives him to philosophize in such a way? To recognize this, we need to understand which drives lead people to be negative and hateful towards life, and the matter of how a drive can degrade the natural causes that created it and lead to illness comes to the fore. For this, according to Nietzsche, we must first establish an understanding that will correctly identify the manipulations of morality and enable us to liberate our instincts and feelings from its tyranny. Accompanying this question becomes the rather critical issue of how we can destabilize the prevailing drives and make the life-affirming drives functional. This way of thinking will help us to understand how human beings can develop views against life, how their desires are interrupted, and how drives ignore themselves and come to the point where they find life meaningless.

Nietzsche sought to establish another kind of etiology, without a metaphysically value-laden ground, involving instincts and forces in such a way as to cancel the mechanical and teleological causality used by the natural sciences. Psychology serves to elucidate the conditions under which the action is carried out, which drives are fulfilled in the action, and, furthermore, the relationship of the agent's drives to this action. Therefore, to do psychology, it is necessary to turn directly to the concrete individual human being and to analyze the semiotic function of drives from that point onwards. However, psychological elements are by no means given, nor are they reduced to a single

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<sup>112</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unpublished Fragments from the Period of Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 16 [61].

function; their conditions and encounters are always multi-layered and thus open to multiple interpretations in relationality. Thereby, instead of making claims of objectivity, psychological insight focuses on the perspective of the subjectivity occupying that position in the process of an action. Besides, this approach provides us with a means to illuminate how mankind became ill and began to produce sublime values and a moral judgment of life and allows us the opportunity to generate new values that can heal mankind from the threat of nihilism that comes with the devaluation of values. Describing the drives of the psychological state that generates values will prepare the ground for creating new values by transforming and directing them.

With the genealogy, we have seen the conditions of the emergence of our values and the strategies that ensure their domination and legitimization in the present. As Nietzsche demonstrated, it is not rational elements that determine historical relations and transformations but psychological processes in which drives and affects are critical factors. The present is always under the tutelage of the past and is the consequence of past mistakes, successes, errors, and desires. Nietzsche says that the values inherited from the past to the present do not reach us through ideas but are transmitted through feelings.<sup>113</sup> Even the feelings experienced by the individual human being are determined by the past and surrounded by the influences we inherit: “Trust your feelings!’ -But feelings are nothing final or original; behind feelings there stand judgments and evaluations which we inherit in the form of feelings (inclinations, aversions).<sup>114</sup>” Values de facto occupy every reaction, behavior, and motive we perform in everyday life. In this case, the values and moral judgments we possess are the rationalized states of the affects we have at the psycho-physiological level. Nature formed by the values we are born into, which we inherit from the past, is called first nature by Nietzsche.<sup>115</sup> We generally experience a tension between our nature, which we have inherited from history, and the conditions of the present; in many cases, in fact, we struggle to reject that nature. Over time, as a result of our new knowledge and behavior, we acquire a second nature by redefining the past in order to abandon our

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<sup>113</sup> D §30

<sup>114</sup> D §35

<sup>115</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “*On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.*” Chapter. In Nietzsche: *Untimely Meditations*, edited by Daniel Breazeale, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, (Cambridge University Press, 1997). §3.

first nature: “It is an attempt to give oneself, as it were a posteriori, a past in which one would like to originate in opposition to that in which one did originate”<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, this is not simple because the past is deeply rooted in all its institutions and traditions, and our second nature may not be sufficient to confront and negate it, but what will show us the way out is that our first nature was once our second nature.<sup>117</sup>

Nietzsche uses psychology as a therapeutic function in order to have a new nature outside the moral values that distort life in relation to our emotions. In this way, he seeks to overcome the dominance of Christian moral values which, by restraining our desires and misinterpreting our passions, lead us to reject and hate life. In criticizing existing moral values, Nietzsche does not seek to legitimize immoral behaviors; after all, the behaviors seen as immoral are determined by morality, so he is concerned with the non-moral in the sense that morality ceases to be a fundamental issue. In other words, the problem is that our actions are determined around moral reasons within the categories of moral and immoral, whereas Nietzsche calls to free our actions from this ground and to act and feel for different reasons:

It goes without saying that I do not deny -unless I am a fool -that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged -but I think the one should be encouraged and the other avoided for other reasons than hitherto. We have to learn to think differently - in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more! to feel differently.<sup>118</sup>

For feeling differently, it is necessary to carry out an investigation starting from the person who feels and to determine what kind of states of affect and drives give rise to these feelings. Throughout the history of philosophy, philosophers have endeavored not to project their own personalities, individual desires, and passions on the subjects they deal with. Since philosophy as a theoretical activity is concerned with universals and absolutes, they distinguish between an argument and the person who puts it forward. Criticizing the person who raises philosophical arguments, rather than trying to refute them, is called *ad hominem* rhetorical fallacy in discussion and is considered invalid. Furthermore, *ad hominem* is usually regarded as deflecting the discussion away from the issues raised or reducing it to the foibles, character, and past mistakes

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> D §103.

of the person.<sup>119</sup> In this regard, they have always attempted to eliminate their own subjectivity, singularity, and temporality from the lens of philosophy and thus establish universal judgments. Thinking is thus treated as something independent of all the existential conditions of the thinker, historically outside of his or her embodied interaction and affective transitions. However, from Nietzsche's point of view, there is no such impersonality or a situation in which the conditions of the thinker do not participate in the thought. Formulating universal judgments is a moral attitude in the sense that the thinker imposes his or her own conception of truth on others, and certain drives are at work here as well. This attitude is an effort to conceal the thinkers' own ambitions, personal interests, and psycho-social states that form their views on life. Nietzsche philosophizes not with reference to the philosophical argument put forward but by focusing directly on the individual person who presents that argument. Ideas are not things that float in the air; they emerge from certain encounters and orientations in certain circumstances and contexts; as such, they always bear the signature and style of their author in their successors, and their focus betrays the ways in which he or she personally evaluates life. As shown in the genealogy, the attempt to understand values in a supersensible way is itself already a value-laden activity, historically occurred because of the struggle of certain forces in life, and there is no absolute value that is independent of relations and closed to transformation, as is assumed. We mentioned that Nietzsche's genealogical analysis focuses on the practical application of values, as opposed to a narrative of values based on purposes, as the English moralists assumed. Those who carry out the practices are individuals who live in a certain culture within a specific time interval and perform them in a bodily experience. People participate in life with values interpreted by certain psychological states (drives, desires, instincts) and certain physiological influences (forces, struggles, resistances). In this aspect, concerning values, Nietzsche takes as a basis the manifestations realized in the individual-singular situations of the person who evaluates them. For any philosophical argument, Nietzsche's point of view that we should take as a basis is this: "What do claims like this tell us about the people who make them?"<sup>120</sup> Besides, the content and style of each judgment or discourse, in fact, give us much information about the personality of the thinker. Therefore, the thoughts of philosophers are, in fact, nothing

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<sup>119</sup> Solomon, *Living with Nietzsche: what the great "immoralist" has to teach us*, 27.

<sup>120</sup> BGE §187.

more than personal testimonies and self-portraits through the drives and instincts that prevail in them:

I have gradually come to realize what every great philosophy so far has been: a confession of faith on the part of its author, and a type of involuntary and unself-conscious memoir; in short, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constitute the true living seed from which the whole plant has always grown. Actually, to explain how the strangest metaphysical claims of a philosopher really come about, it is always good (and wise) to begin by asking: what morality is it (is he –) getting at?<sup>121</sup>

In this regard, if philosophical discourses emerge as manifestations of a person's moral attitude towards life and psychological states, it becomes a task of thought to reveal this ground that philosophers constantly try to mask. He abandons the form of questioning used by the metaphysical point of view in order to turn directly to the individual human being. Nietzsche, as Deleuze says, asks the question 'who' as opposed to 'what' and does not ask what values are but who evaluates them.<sup>122</sup> The question of 'what' is always a question asked in order to find universal, constant, permanent essences. In the "what" question, a distinction is always made between the phenomena through which things manifest themselves and the essences that exist independently behind the phenomena and shape them. Thus, as if a perspective that can timelessly encompass all the appearances of a thing is possible, but it is not:

The question "what is that?" is an imposition of meaning from some other viewpoint. "Essence," the "essential nature," is some... thing perspective and already presupposes a multiplicity. At the bottom of it there always lies "what is that for me?" (for us, for all that lives, etc.) A thing would be defined once all creatures had asked "what is that?" and had answered their question. Supposing one single creature, with its own relationships and perspectives for all things, were missing, then the thing would not yet be "defined."<sup>123</sup>

In this view, the fundamental question should not be what is good but who wants to manifest themselves as good. On the other hand, the question of 'who' does not point to a subject or a constitutive self in classical philosophy. This is because there is no abstract subject independent of influences and interactions without action. In the physiological layer, even the subject itself, as a body, represents a structure in which many forces, effects, and reactions are intertwined. In this respect, when Nietzsche says who evaluates, he is asking who is the force that dominates, directs, and shapes

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<sup>121</sup> BGE §6.

<sup>122</sup> NP, 76.

<sup>123</sup> WP §556.

him. This refers to Nietzsche's most fundamental concept, the will to power, and its perspectivist approach, which we will discuss in the next sections.

## 2.5. The Will to Power and Perspectivism

The will to power is the key concept that runs through Nietzsche's entire philosophy, as a crucial element in his criticism of metaphysics and the natural sciences, and as a characteristic feature of his perspectival way of thinking on a psycho-physiological basis. In addition, it is a means for the realization of the project of naturalizing and re-evaluating all values. For this reason, clarifying what the 'will to power' is and what it is not and identifying its basic features seem to be essential for the understanding of Nietzsche's philosophical critique. There has been much debate among Nietzschean commentators as to whether the doctrine of the will to power is a psychological doctrine, a philological model, an onto-metaphysical explanation, or a Darwinian principle. One reason for this is that Nietzsche expresses his opinions on the will to power, which are widely contained in his unpublished works and notes, cautiously and in a limited way in his published texts. On the other hand, as we mentioned in the previous section, Nietzsche claims that the physicists' conception of a world with constant mechanism, which they regard as the laws of nature, is not a text but an interpretation, and in this sense, he points out that in opposition to this interpretation, the doctrine of the will to power can be put forward as an interpretation of nature that does not contain lawfulness.<sup>124</sup> For Nietzsche, interpretation is not an explanation that encompasses all conditions but an interpretation of an interpretation that exists within everything in the world, which is already shaped by changing interpretations.<sup>125</sup> In this regard, the will to power appears as an assumption, as a non-metaphysical interpretation of the grasp of life. Besides, the fact that so many different interpretations and perspectives have been shaped around the concept of the will to power gives us an idea about the structure of this concept that confirms it. Nietzsche presents the will to power as a principle that sets the character of life and treats it as a movement that will replace perfect nihilism but will also contain such nihilism as a prerequisite to overcoming it.<sup>126</sup> Nihilism, therefore, appears as a version of the will to

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<sup>124</sup> BGE §22.

<sup>125</sup> WP §604.

<sup>126</sup> WP *Preface* §4.

power, as the experience of the destruction of old values and as an indication of the forces through which those values were established, but also as a means of going beyond it and providing the possible condition for evaluating new values.

In accordance with Nietzsche's project of naturalization, a formula for making intelligible what life is can only be possible by making it applicable to everything in life and by making minimal assumptions: "In order to understand what "life" is, what kind of striving and tension life is, the formula must apply as well to trees and plants as to animals."<sup>127</sup> In this regard, Nietzsche mentions the concept of *homo natura*, which he deals with in his naturalization project, together with the will to power.<sup>128</sup> Nietzsche adopted the content of the concept of the will to power, that existence is a struggle for power, directly from biologists such as Maximillian Drossbach and William Henry Rolph.<sup>129</sup> Based on psychological and physiological methods to purify thought from the transcendental, Nietzsche treats all processes of instinctive life as immanent in the will to power as an effective force that constitutes the world.

Assuming, finally, that we succeeded in explaining our entire life of drives as the organization and outgrowth of one basic form of will (namely, of the will to power, which is my claim); assuming we could trace all organic functions back to this will to power and find that it even solved the problem of procreation and nutrition (which is a single problem); then we will have earned the right to clearly designate all efficacious force as: will to power. The world seen from inside, the world determined and described with respect to its "intelligible character" – would be just this "will to power" and nothing else.<sup>130</sup>

For Nietzsche, the will to power is a fundamental element not only in physical-natural scientific events in life but also in all relations that encompass all conscious, namely, social, cultural, moral, and metaphysical activities throughout history. Thus, the shaping of the psychological and physiological layer of the ground on which values are produced in relation to motives, which we examined in the previous chapter, becomes a variation of the forms of self-expression of the will. In this sense, the concept of the will to power is the pathos that imposes itself as the psychological form that prepares the coming to be: "The will to power not a being, not a becoming, but a pathos -the most elemental fact from which a becoming and effecting first emerge."<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> WP §704.

<sup>128</sup> WP §391.

<sup>129</sup> Bernard Reginster, *The Will to Nothingness* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 60.

<sup>130</sup> BGE §36.

<sup>131</sup> WP §536.

Thus, it becomes clear why Nietzsche deals with psychology as the doctrine of the development of the will to power, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Nietzsche also states that the will to power is the basis of the affections and that all other affections are variations of it: “The will to power is the primitive form of affect, that all other affects are only developments of it.”<sup>132</sup> In this sense, psychology's tools of understanding are reshaped and gain a new horizon on the plane of power and forces relations. On the other hand, the reason why the will to power is not characterized as becoming is that the concept of becoming is understood in philosophy as a form of Being in a metaphysically loaded way and is usually positioned morally as the opposite of Being. In this respect, when Nietzsche speaks of becoming, he does not mean the becoming that is taken to be associated with the concept of Being and devalued, or the becoming in which the truth is distorted and constructed as a field of illusion; on the contrary, he reconsiders it on the ground of pathos for the sake of understanding the becoming.

Nietzsche emphasizes in many places that life itself and the innermost essence of being is the will to power.<sup>133</sup> However, this does not mean the will to life; rather, life itself is a particular form of the will to power, and power does not necessarily endeavor to take on this form.<sup>134</sup> On the other hand, the will to power does not imply in any way that the will wants power or that the person seeks power. Thereby, the will to power is by no means a physical, political, or social passion for authority or a desire to rule. Power does not want anything other than itself, and in this respect, it is both wanting and wanted: “Power is the one that wills in the will.”<sup>135</sup> The will to power is an activity that influences everything that exists and is itself the result of such influences so that its designation as 'power' means that it embodies, determines, and reveals the character of that which it influences.<sup>136</sup> Each of the things in the world is related to each other as power, and life is the realm of chaos, in which opposing forces present themselves in a struggle for power, seeking to impose and increase their own power.

Life itself is essentially a process of appropriating, injuring, overpowering the alien and the weaker, oppressing, being harsh, imposing your own form, incorporating, and at least, the very

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<sup>132</sup> WP §688.

<sup>133</sup> WP §693, BGE §13, §259 and A §6.

<sup>134</sup> WP §692.

<sup>135</sup> NP, 85.

<sup>136</sup> Alexander Nehamas, 80.

least, exploiting [...] It will have to be the embodiment of will to power, it will want to grow, spread, grab, win dominance, – not out of any morality or immorality, but because it is alive, and because life is precisely will to power.<sup>137</sup>

In this regard, the world consists of the sum total of immanent forces in a dynamic state of perpetual becoming, in which they ceaselessly struggle with each other, replace each other, and undergo endless changes. In other words, the world is not a stabilized and finalized world of facts or being but a world of becoming in which endless change and movement games prevail due to this struggle. There is only the actuality of a plurality of will-to-power processes as reality; in this context, power struggles do not take place in empty space; realization is the expression of a will to power. Dynamic organizations of will to power are not a pure unity but a constantly changing aggregate of power centers working with and against each other, constantly creating differences. As a result of this struggle, some power centers increase their power by prevailing, while other power centers decrease their power by obeying. Even if the amount of power increases or decreases during power struggles, the total power in life does not change in any way; only the balance of power is altered. In this sense, the amount of power that constitutes life is limited; moreover, it is surrounded by nothingness. In a rather impressive passage, Nietzsche describes how he experiences the world through his own mirror, in other words, from his perspective, and how it is manifested in his own will. To refer directly to the passage that expresses Nietzsche's whole way of thinking and his conceptualization of the will to power:

And do you know what "the world" is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror? This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size, a household without expenses or losses, but likewise without increase or income; enclosed by "nothingness" as by a boundary; not something blurry or wasted, not something endlessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force, and not a space that might be "empty" here or there, but rather as force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and a flood of its forms [...] do you want a name for this world? A solution for all its riddles? A light for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men?- This world is the will to power- and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power- and nothing besides!<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> BGE §259.

<sup>138</sup> WP §1067.

How should we understand these statements? The explanation of how things come into being, how they differ, and how they change is a subject of metaphysics. Nietzsche's concept of the will to power seems to be a response to this kind of explanation but with different motives. Therefore, primarily, it is necessary to reveal how Nietzsche's understanding distinguishes itself from metaphysical thought. The world constituted with the will to power is not the union of spaceless monads, as in the philosophy of Leibniz, or the manifestation of essence and attribution, as in the philosophy of Spinoza. This way of philosophizing, as we have seen in the genealogical section, is always constructed from a supersensory origin, non-historically, in a fiction in which there are transcendental principles behind the phenomenon that are not subject to the senses and determine the phenomenon in this respect, they are conceived as constant, unchanging principles and do not involve becoming. Also, this form of philosophizing is to try to dress becoming in the category of 'being,' and this effort is itself, in fact, a manifestation of the will to power.<sup>139</sup> However, the concept of the will to power is not a principle, an essence, or an origin underlying everything; moreover, it is anti-foundationalist. Therefore, one of the most significant differences that distinguishes Nietzsche's thought from the classical metaphysical approach, which seeks essences, regularities, and correspondences, is that the will to power is discontinuous with formless chaos.<sup>140</sup> From Nietzsche's point of view, there is no reality that can be reduced to a single, simple element.<sup>141</sup> The will to power shows that what appears to be singular and individual is already related to many other forces and is made up of plurality and diversity. In this respect, what constitutes the reality of something is not based on a revealing principle but is rather the intersection of multiple forces and many opposing interpretations that are dynamically related to many things.

Nietzsche equates force with the will<sup>142</sup>, but to will is not to desire or demand; the difference of will lies in its dominating effect, and there is no such thing as willing per se; there is always the willing of something, in this sense, the will is not a cause prior to the 'happening.'<sup>143</sup> In other words, when the will wills something, this does not mean that it goes beyond itself, "rather, will gathers itself together in willing. That the one

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<sup>139</sup> WP §617.

<sup>140</sup> Ruediger Hermann Grimm, *Nietzsche's Theory of Knowledge*, (de Gruyter, 1977), 2.

<sup>141</sup> WP §536.

<sup>142</sup> WP §490: "The only force that exists is of the same kind as that of the will."

<sup>143</sup> WP §668.

who wills, wills himself into his will, means that such willing itself, and in unity with it he who wills and what is willed, become manifest in the willing.”<sup>144</sup> The will to power does not imply a kind of will; power always goes beyond itself; it overflows from itself as more than it is; it exists in the impermanence of unlimited creativity and openness to change, of sacrificing every form of itself with a constant surplus. On the other hand, the concept of ‘will to power’ refers to a kind of orientation, and this shows that it has goals but not as deliberate. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, Nietzsche criticizes the concept of purpose; however, as Richardson points out, Nietzsche's critique of teleology is directed against certain forms of purposive understanding: conscious teleology as the rational progression of things, steady-state teleology as a stable movement towards a targeted end, or holistic teleology as the destination to which the whole of life in general strives.<sup>145</sup> The world of becoming does not have a predetermined goal, as the idealist thinkers ascribe to it; if it had an ultimate destination, it would have already arrived at it in this respect: “The present must absolutely not be justified by reference to a future, nor the past by reference to the present.”<sup>146</sup> In other words, there is nothing predetermined; the relations between powers cannot be known in advance what they will lead to and are, therefore, without ultimate purpose. However, each power has and strives for the goal of self-realization, of asserting its power, but this purpose is not a telos at the end or a principle at the beginning, but the actuality of the power itself. Furthermore, these aims are not “given”; each aim is embodied in the randomness of many changes and occurrences. For Nietzsche, all aims are a manifestation of the will to power: “All “purposes,” “aims,” and “meaning” are only modes of expression and metamorphoses of one will that is inherent in all events: the will to power.”<sup>147</sup> Having aims is the will to increase the power of the will to power, and in this respect, goals are, in fact, the instruments of power. In other words, the will to power tends towards aims that can increase its power and tries to create the conditions that will make itself effective by serving these aims, just like what drives try to do in psychology. In addition, one force reconfigures and redirects the purpose of another force under its influence to serve the purpose of increasing its own power, thus creating inevitable organizations similar to the

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<sup>144</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Vol I*, trans. David Farrel Krell, (Harper & Row, 1991), 51.

<sup>145</sup> John Richardson, *Nietzsche's system*, (Oxford University Press, 1996), 21.

<sup>146</sup> WP §708.

<sup>147</sup> WP §675.

hierarchy of means and goals.<sup>148</sup> In this respect, it is important to show that the relational account of the will to power is fundamentally different not only from the old metaphysical teleological understanding but also from the causal-mechanical approach to reality that became dominant in the modern era.

Nietzsche redefines the concept of force, which physicists use for the mechanical conception of the world, by cleansing it from its metaphysical qualities, providing it an explanatory quality with a minimum of assumptions, and expressing force with an internal explanation.<sup>149</sup> The existence of a thing is the embodiment of the power that is already active in it and is in constant struggle with many forces outside of itself. In other words, the existence of an object is an indication of which force expresses itself in it. Even in its sovereign character, a force is under the influence of many forces and is always available to influence and be influenced. A force is not a metaphysical reduction or a thing-in-itself (*ding an sich*); furthermore, there is nothing isolated, independent, and abstracted from its relationality. The process of trying to find the essence of a thing by abstracting it from all its external relations is like trying to find the essence of an onion by peeling off all the skins, but after peeling, there is no onion left.

The "thing-in-itself" nonsensical. If I remove all the relationships, all the "properties," all the "activities" of a thing, the thing does not remain over; because thingness has only been invented by us owing to the requirements of logic, thus with the aim of defining, communication (to bind together the multiplicity of relationships, properties, activities)<sup>150</sup>

In this sense, will to power is not before or after the relation; everything exists in relation to each other; that is, there is nothing non-relational. In this respect, it is out of the question to remain outside the game of influence and being influenced; not to be relational means not to exist. In this relationality, each power imposes its own conditions on another power, wants to dominate it, to subjugate it, and in this respect, at every moment, each and everything is being probed and at risk of being seized by the other. The main motivation of a center of power in its relation to other powers in its environment is "appropriation and assimilation are above all a desire to overwhelm, a forming, shaping and reshaping, until at length that which has been overwhelmed

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<sup>148</sup> Nietzsche, *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, 9 [91].

<sup>149</sup> WP §619.

<sup>150</sup> WP §558.

has entirely gone over into the power domain the aggressor and has increased the same.”<sup>151</sup> However, this relationality is not mechanistically realized as an action-reaction of things with equal powers but through a hierarchical dynamism surrounded by unpredictable changes. Each power formation has different degrees of power, and the way in which they influence each other varies according to their differences in the amount of power. In other words, there is no force that is identical and equal to each other; even if their quantities are equal, the other forces affecting them or the form of force that dominates them can be different. In this context, when a power engages with a stronger power, it has less influence over it and is more influenced by it; on the other hand, when it struggles with a weaker power, it has more influence and is less influenced by it. It means that each force is related to each other in a different way, and this gives us an idea of the infinite diversification and differentiation of things. Besides, the increase or decrease of power in the struggle of forces is reflected in the quantitative change of many forces other than itself, as in entropy: “Supposing that the world had a certain quantum of force at its disposal, then it is obvious that every displacement of power at any point would affect the whole system.”<sup>152</sup>

On the other hand, the relationship that the forces of the will to power establish with each other is not a subject-predicate or agent-act relationship like cause-effect in the understanding of mechanical causality. The conception of the world conceived by mechanistic theory proposes stable units (atoms) to establish calculable relationships, numbers to measure motion, and a conception of the subject to explain activity (cause and effect). Therefore, the concept of the subject is a transformed form of the concept of the 'thing-in-itself' and exists in psychology as an agent, in physical phenomena as an influencer, and in metaphysics as the determiner of everything. However, the fact that the will to power constantly interacts with each other to impose its power does not imply the existence of free will, nor is it related to an unfree will conditioned by cause and effect. The concept of free will is the result of the way we use language and are seduced by grammar, and it always makes a distinction between subject and object; it always presupposes an action directed towards a ready-made/given object as opposed to a constant, unchanging subject, independent of circumstances. However, such distinctions are fictions that are added to the event after it has been rationalized: “Our

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<sup>151</sup> WP §656.

<sup>152</sup> WP §638.

"understanding of an event" has consisted in our inventing a subject which was made responsible for something that happens and for how it happens."<sup>153</sup> On the other hand, the idea of free will is psychologically related to the fact that man feels free where he feels the strongest sense of life, but it is precisely in the things to which he is fully attached that his sense of freedom makes itself manifest, thus misinterpreting the increase in the sense of power and taking it into the metaphysical realm.<sup>154</sup> In other words, as Nietzsche puts it, the feeling of freedom should not be understood as not being bound to anything and being free from relations: "But what if the opposite were true: that he is always living in manifold dependence but regards himself as free when, out of long habituation, he no longer perceives the weight of the chains? It is only from new chains that he now suffers: - 'freedom of will' really means nothing more than feeling no new chains."<sup>155</sup> In this respect, free will is produced in three stages; first, human beings isolate the action in becoming, then they create a corresponding set of values based on the isolated action, and finally, they evaluate the values in the created set of values as if they were their own. Moreover, the treatment of the subject as if he or she makes decisions independently of all circumstances and could have acted otherwise is produced in order to hold the agent responsible for his or her action. Hence, the basic understanding of free will is to command others and to want them to obey, but at the same time to make others chargeable.<sup>156</sup> In this respect, the concept of free will is actually an imposition of a moral point of view. According to Nietzsche, there is no subject behind the action; the concept of the subject is a kind of fiction, and there is only action, moreover, the expression of power.

Just as the common people separates lightning from its flash and takes the latter to be a deed, something performed by a subject, which is called lightning, popular morality separates strength from the manifestations of strength, as though there were an indifferent substratum behind the strong person which had the freedom to manifest strength or not. But there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it; 'the doer' is invented as an afterthought, – the doing is everything.<sup>157</sup>

In this sense, there is no potentiality or self-containment other than the constant self-realization of power at every moment; power always exists in the way it is self-

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<sup>153</sup> WP §551.

<sup>154</sup> WS §9.

<sup>155</sup> WS §10.

<sup>156</sup> WP §19.

<sup>157</sup> GM §13.

realized. This means that a thing cannot be anything other than itself, and a being becomes a being only in its own state of being. Just like İsmet Özel expresses in a poem: “The rain is rain only when it falls / you are yourself only when you are yourself.”<sup>158</sup>

On the other hand, this does not mean a determinism in which everything is fixedly predetermined and enters into a process of cause and effect or a fatalism in which everything happens necessarily. Nietzsche says that the unfree will is a mythological belief and that necessities, causal bonds, and legality are qualities constructed by us.<sup>159</sup> In this sense, the affective moral character of the unfree will is not to take responsibility, not to want to be guilty, or to subordinate one's own powerlessness to circumstances. Moreover, it is a way of wanting to legitimize one's own powerlessness by subjecting oneself to a superior law. Therefore, for Nietzsche, there is no qualitatively defined free or unfree will, but there is a strong or weak will that can be understood quantitatively.<sup>160</sup> The fact remains that what makes it strong or weak is not simply the amount of power it wields but the attitude it displays in power struggles and whether or not it is able to use its power effectively. The struggle of one effective force against another is by no means of a negative nature; the force that subordinates one to the other does not negate the other; rather, the important thing for it lies in its affirmation of the difference of its own power and its satisfaction with the effectiveness of its own power.<sup>161</sup> In this way, the strong will, in displaying its power, determines the conditions and shapes and directs the weak forces. On the other hand, the weak will wants to be under the strong will and unite with it, however, not because it wants to be ruled, but in order to weaken it with its own weakness and to overcome it by taking advantage of the strength of the strong will.<sup>162</sup> Put another way, the relationship between the powers is by no means a dialectical master-slave relationship or a unity of opposites; the stronger always tends to preserve its difference, trying not to allow the weakness of the weaker to infect it.

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<sup>158</sup> İsmet Özel, *Of Not Being a Jew*, trans. Michalangelo Guida (TİYO Yayınları, 2005).

<sup>159</sup> BGE §21.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> NP, 8-9.

<sup>162</sup> WP §655.

The will to power, in presenting itself, is always oriented towards increasing the amount of power, growing, and expanding the sphere of dominance. Each force, by its own nature, wants to be active, to produce effects, that is, to manifest itself. Since it must do this in relation to and in opposition to all other forces, this relation of action-effect leads to a constant resistance, a tension between each force. All things in life are constantly seeking to assert themselves, to build up resistance against every external force that hinders them, to overcome every obstacle they encounter, and to increase and expand their power to do so. In this respect, every force, as a will to power, is always looking for other wills to resist it; furthermore, the will to power can only demonstrate its competence and capacity by encountering resistance in its struggle with a will that exceeds it: “The will to power can manifest itself only against resistances; therefore, it seeks that which resists it”<sup>163</sup> However, the will to power is not simply the will to constantly encounter obstacles and to be determined by resistance. The obstacle faced by the will to power is not a situation that can be avoided but a natural process, and Nietzsche says that the will to power seeks and desires what is opposed to itself and, therefore, dissatisfaction.<sup>164</sup> This explains why Nietzsche understands the will to power in terms of pathos.

The concept of power is, in and of itself, devoid of any determinate content. It gets a determinate content only from its relation to some determinate desire or drive. Something constitutes a resistance only in relation to a determinate end one desires to realize. [...] The will to power therefore has the structure of a second-order desire: it is a desire whose object includes another (first-order) desire. It is, specifically, a desire for the overcoming of resistance in the pursuit of some determinate first-order desire.<sup>165</sup>

The nature of desire is paradoxical in that desire is always established together with the relation of deprivation, and in this respect, it is both its cause and its aim. As Bernard Reginster pointed out: “The desire to desire cannot be satisfied without causing the agent significant displeasure, for its satisfaction requires that the agent have an unsatisfied desire.”<sup>166</sup> But this desire should not be understood as the result of a lack; on the contrary, the will to power desires what is worth spending its overflowing power for, such that achieving and overcoming the resistance it desires does not satisfy

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<sup>163</sup> WP §556.

<sup>164</sup> WP §702.

<sup>165</sup> Bernard Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 132.

<sup>166</sup> Bernard Reginster, *The Will to Power and the Ethics of Creativity*, in Nietzsche and Morality edited by Brian Leiter and Neil Sinhababu, (Oxford University Press, 2007), 38.

its manifestation of power. That's why, as Nietzsche said: "In the end, we love our desires and not the thing desired."<sup>167</sup> Also, the existence of resistance is both the motivation for the power's desire to increase its power and the cause of its dissatisfaction. The aim of every force to increase its power is the search for the other that will satisfy its desire. Power only reveals its difference in relation to a power that transcends itself. In this respect, the basic motivation of the will to power includes both the desire to overcome resistance and the desire to find a resistance to overcome.<sup>168</sup> However, the inevitability of the relationship between the existence of resistance and the dissatisfaction of power means that suffering, which constitutes an important problem for human beings in life, is dealt with on a new ground; moreover, it loses its status as a fundamental objection to life. Therefore, if the will to overcome resistance is the basic condition of power, then valuing power requires valuing suffering.

The doctrine of the will to power radically alters our conception of the role and significance of suffering in human existence. If, in particular, we take power—the overcoming of resistance—to be a value, then we can see easily how it can be the principle behind a reevaluation of suffering. Indeed, if we value the overcoming of resistance, then we must also value the resistance that is an ingredient of it. Since suffering is defined by resistance, we must also value suffering.<sup>169</sup>

On the other side, the desire of the will to power to overcome resistance is not simply to enter into a relationship of subjugation or control; moreover, exploitation, domination, or control are not its purposes but merely the consequences of this endeavor to increase power. One force does not seek to establish absolute and permanent dominance over another force, nor is this even possible. Such constancy is constantly undermined by the dynamic flow of life and the multiplicity of forces acting. In certain ways, since in every relationship that a power enters into with its opponents, it seeks to manifest and assert its power in spite of the other, in specific ways, the powers are balanced by limiting each other, but they are not equalized. They form certain embodied unities, one subordinating the other or one conquering the other. Everything that becomes wholeness, unity, or singularity are power centers formed by forces coming together, but there is no static relationship between them, and the power struggle continues.

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<sup>167</sup> BGE §175.

<sup>168</sup> Bernard Reginster, 37.

<sup>169</sup> Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism*, (Harvard University Press, 2006), 177.

My idea is that every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force (-its will to power:) and to thrust back all that resists its extension. But it continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies and ends by coming to an arrangement ("union") with those of them that are sufficiently related to it: thus they then conspire together for power. And the process goes on.<sup>170</sup>

In other words, any force within the formed cluster has not surrendered itself; it has only entered into a kind of 'dangerous compromise' or 'cooperation' in order to enter into relationships that will enable it to increase its own power, and it continues to resist by maintaining its uniqueness, moreover, there has never been a defeat accepted, or a victory won. This can be extended from all inorganic activities to all organic processes and all cultural, social, and intellectual structures. For example, a body is a unified power center in which many forces limit and intersect each other. All organs endeavor to increase their power activity in relation to each other and to the outside world, and even when they cooperate, they exhibit resistance to each other.

However, this unity shaped by power centers is not a self-preservation instinct as in the Darwinian understanding of evolution. As Gregory Moore puts it, Nietzsche does not deny the process of evolution: "Nietzsche adopts a broadly evolutionist perspective: he believes in the mutability of organic forms; he sees morality, art, and consciousness not as uniquely human endowments with their origin in a transcendental realm, but as products of the evolutionary process itself."<sup>171</sup> However, Nietzsche's main concern is that behind Darwin's and the natural sciences' idea of evolution in general, there are principles that include moral assumptions and metaphysical elements. In line with the decisive influence of Spinoza's concept of *conatus* in the natural sciences, Darwin claimed that the most basic instinct exhibited by the organism is survival and self-preservation. In addition, the theory of evolution treats the development of life as reactive and passive, determined and shaped by external conditions, in the sense that living beings only have to be able to adapt to their environment and keep up with the conditions. However, Nietzsche put forward that '*conatus*' is a teleological and metaphysical principle and that self-preservation is only a secondary consequence of the power struggle; after all, power chooses the expression of power, not survival: "Above all, a living thing wants to discharge its strength – life itself is will to power: self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent

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<sup>170</sup> WP §636.

<sup>171</sup> Gregory Moore, *Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor*, (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 21.

consequences of this.”<sup>172</sup> In this respect, no species tries to keep itself alive by spending the least effort and energy; on the contrary, they constantly endeavor to release and boost their strength at the expense of their life. Besides, it is not the case that species adapt themselves to external conditions and are determined in this way: “Life is not the adaptation of inner circumstances to outer ones, but will to power, which, working from within, incorporates and subdues more and more of that which is "outside.””<sup>173</sup> In other words, to put adaptation at the center is to misinterpret life shaped by the will to power through a false association of cause and effect.

This is to misunderstand the essence of life, its will to power, we overlook the prime importance that the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, re-interpreting, re-directing and formative forces have, which ‘adaptation’ follows only when they have had their effect; in the organism itself, the dominant role of these highest functionaries, in whom the life-will is active and manifests itself, is denied.<sup>174</sup>

On the other hand, although Darwin claims that the process of evolution happens blindly without a mechanism behind it, his theory presupposes a predetermination that moves from disorder to order, where the weak are weeded out, and the strong survive through natural selection. For Nietzsche, however, the natural process did not develop in this way; species progressing towards perfection and improving themselves is a fiction. What, in fact, happens, just as we see in genealogy, is that the weak dominate the strong, and the strong are eliminated: “It unfortunately turns out the opposite way to what the school of Darwin wants [... ] to the detriment of the strong, the privileged, the fortunate exceptions. Species do not grow in perfection: time and again the weak become the masters of the strong.”<sup>175</sup> According to Nietzsche, Darwin's concept of adaptation is the result of a moral point of view because it rationalizes and legitimizes the existence of the weak and powerless and is also a kind of attempt at domestication.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> BGE §13. Cf. William Henry Rolph, *Biologische Probleme zugleich als Versuch zur Entwicklung einer rationellen Ethik* (Engelmann, 1884), 97 : “the struggle for existence is not a struggle for defense, but a war of attack, which can be transformed into a struggle for defense only under certain circumstances. Growth and increase and perfection are the consequences of that successful war of aggression, but in no way the purpose of it or even of a tendency lying in nature. While for the Darwinist there is no struggle for existence everywhere where the existence of the creature is not threatened, for me the struggle for life is an all-present one: It is just primarily a struggle for life, a struggle for increase of life, but no struggle just live!”

<sup>173</sup> WP §681.

<sup>174</sup> GM II § 12.

<sup>175</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, ‘Reconnaissance Raids of an Untimely Man’, §14.

<sup>176</sup> WP §685.

For Nietzsche, every force is positioned as affecting and affected in terms of the amount of power based on quantitative differences in its relationship with each other, while they are positioned as active and reactive in terms of their qualities. In this context, forces are positioned as obeying and commanding, and both obeying and commanding are ways in which force is effective within the plurality of forces. As Deleuze points out:

Active and reactive are precisely the original qualities which express the relation of force with force. Because forces which enter into relation do not have quantity without each of them having, at the same time, the quality corresponding to their difference in quantity as such. This difference between forces qualified according to their quantity as active or reactive will be called hierarchy.<sup>177</sup>

What makes a force active or reactive is its attitude towards power relations; the active force tends towards power by affirming its own power and difference, while the reactive force denies difference. In this respect, reactive force is a form of fatigue from the endless power struggle, resentment against the power of the powerful, and blaming others for one's own powerlessness and taking revenge on them. Thus, reactive force gains its power by restricting other forces and preventing them from expressing their power: "Illness for example, separates me from what I can do, as reactive force it makes me reactive, it narrows my possibilities and condemns me to a diminished milieu to which I can do no more than adapt myself."<sup>178</sup> However, this positioning of forces does not mean that they have static and unchanging characteristics; on the contrary, the struggle for power is constantly dynamic and fluid. On the other hand, the reactive force is not one that withdraws from the struggle or ceases to be a force; it is another form of accumulating the power of obedience and trying to disempower the active force and detain it. In this respect, reactive forces can become dominant over active forces, but as Deleuze puts it, they do not do so by creating a superior force; moreover, the victory of reactive forces does not stop them from being reactive.<sup>179</sup> As we have seen in the case of genealogies, slaves, as a form of reactive forces, have convinced masters that their values are the truth so that they can subjugate them from a moral position by making them feel guilty about their own powerlessness. Another example of reactive forces is given by Nietzsche through the artistic conceptions of

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<sup>177</sup> NP, 40.

<sup>178</sup> NP, 66.

<sup>179</sup> NP, 57.

the powerless. In this sense, he asks what the powerless would do to make a work of art that does not appeal to them and cannot be produced by them enjoyable for them: "They would interpret their own value feelings into it; e.g., the "triumph of the moral world-order" or the doctrine of the "worthlessness of existence" or the invitation to "resignation.""<sup>180</sup> In this respect, another important feature of the will to power appears at this point. The active or reactive nature of forces is based on their value creation, which is the result of their activities of interpreting their conditions by affirming or denying them. In this sense, the existence of nihilistic values lies in the triumphant interpretations of reactive forces. Thus, in order to diagnose nihilism and overcome it, Nietzsche focuses on the interpretive activities of the forces by addressing it on completely new ground. According to Nietzsche, the will to power actively and continuously interprets all the conditions it encounters in all the relations it enters, that is, in power struggles.

The will to power interprets (-it is a question of interpretation when an organ is constructed): it defines limits, determines degrees, variations of power. Mere variations of power could not feel themselves to be such: there must be present something that wants to grow and interprets the value of whatever else wants to grow. Equal in that- In fact, interpretation is itself a means of becoming master of something. (The organic process constantly presupposes interpretations.)<sup>181</sup>

Since life is in a constant state of chaos and all encounters are in constant flux between many active forces, the will to power needs to be constantly interpreted. In this respect, each power interprets itself and the other powers it encounters from its own perspective in order to increase its power and establish dominance, but at the same time, it is itself surrounded by opposing interpretations. Interpretation is a tool that enables the power to identify the differences between the resistance encountered by the power and its own power and to overcome the resistance. Power struggles consist of a plurality and diversity of interpretations that conflict against each other, falsify each other, and dominate over each other; moreover, there is a formation of power with 'infinite' possibilities of interpretation. In this sense, the activity of interpretation should not be understood as relativism; in relativism, there are always interpretations of an absolute truth that can be considered equally true. However, from Nietzsche's point of view, there is no absolute truth; since the balances in every power relationship change

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<sup>180</sup> WP §852.

<sup>181</sup> WP §643.

dynamically and the amounts of power increase and decrease, it is not possible to make an absolute judgment that is valid and correct for all conditions. We cannot know with certainty whether the theories we try to explain the world correspond to it. Each power creates the field of truth, which is an interpretation from its own perspective. Therefore, Nietzsche “avoids the dogmatic assertion of a “correct” interpretation, while at the same time avoiding an unmitigated relativism in which all interpretations are regarded as having equal value.”<sup>182</sup> No two interpretations are equal, but if we ask what determines their truth, the answer is what will enable each power to increase its power for itself. Furthermore, the activity of interpretation is not an activity of a constant, unchanging subject towards a fact; there are no phenomena, there are only interpretations.<sup>183</sup>

“Everything is subjective,” you say; but even this is interpretation. The “subject” is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is.- Finally, is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis. In so far as the word “knowledge” has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings.- “Perspectivism.” It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm.<sup>184</sup>

In this respect, if one asks who the interpreter is, it is only the will to power itself, which is surrounded by many opposing interpretations: “One may not ask: “who then interprets?” for the interpretation itself is a form of the will to power, exists (but not as a “being” but as a process, a becoming) as an affect.”<sup>185</sup> Although the activity of interpretation seems to be a feature peculiar to human beings, this does not mean that Nietzsche is anthropomorphizing when he attributes this activity to all formations in life.<sup>186</sup> Grimms discusses each organism's interpretation of life from its own perspective through the example of the amoeba, one of the most primitive organisms. As a creature devoid of sensory organs, the amoeba makes only one distinction in its interaction with its environment: whether the things it encounters are food for it or not, and in this respect, it reduces all the differences and diversities of the world around it to this distinction. In this sense, the amoeba has interpreted its environment in an

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<sup>182</sup> Alan D. Schrift, *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction* (Routledge, 1990), 180.

<sup>183</sup> WP §481.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> WP §556.

<sup>186</sup> Ruediger Hermann Grimm, *Nietzsche's Theory of Knowledge*, 70.

overly simplistic way, with a distinction that seems erroneous from our point of view; however, “a very necessary one for the amoeba, which might very well starve if it were suddenly forced to make the distinctions which we make between the various forms of microscopic life. The interpretative "error" which the amoeba makes is vital to its continued existence: it is a very useful error indeed.”<sup>187</sup> In this regard, what is necessary for life is not certain and absolute truths; the existence of uncertainty and error, which is an object of fear for humans, is essential for life, but this error does not mean falsity: “Since perspectivism is a ‘condition of life’ so is ‘uncertainty’: to reject uncertainty is to reject life. To love life is to love ‘error,’ by which, as I have emphasized several times, Nietzsche does not mean ‘falsehood’ but simply ‘belief that is less than certainly true.’”<sup>188</sup> On the other hand, interpretation is by no means an imaginary/fictional process but the constitutive factor by which a force shapes its environment and is shaped by it. Just like the distinction the amoeba makes in its own world, the constructs of truth and scientific criteria we have are vital to our continued existence. In the absence of these apparatuses, humanity may be in danger of extinction, but this does not mean that they are the truth or that they explain reality in absolute ways: “The law of causality, a very well acquired habit of belief, so much a part of us that not to believe in it would destroy the race. But are they for that reason truths? What a conclusion! As if the preservation of man were a proof of truth!”<sup>189</sup> In this sense, all metaphysical and scientific designs and cultural and moral values that determine the relationship between human beings and their environment are interpretations imposed on life. Furthermore, “truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live. The value for life is ultimately decisive.”<sup>190</sup> Nietzsche puts the will to power as a perspectival interpretation against the claim of absolute truth. In this respect, there are no objective truths, nor are there objective values that apply to everyone; it is all the result of the creation of perspectives and the imposition of these perspectives on others by certain forces.

That the value of the world lies in our interpretation (-that other interpretations than merely human ones are perhaps somewhere possible-); that previous interpretations have been perspective valuations by virtue of which we can survive in life, i.e., in the will to power, for the growth of power; that every elevation of man brings with it the overcoming of narrower

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<sup>187</sup> Grimm, 71.

<sup>188</sup> Julian Young, *Friedrich Nietzsche: a Philosophical Biography* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 416.

<sup>189</sup> WP §497

<sup>190</sup> WP §493.

interpretations; that every strengthening and increase of power opens up new perspectives and means believing in new horizons-this idea permeates my writings. The world with which we are concerned is false, i.e., is not a fact but a fable and approximation on the basis of a meager sum of observations; it is "in flux," as something in a state of becoming, as a falsehood always changing but never getting near the truth: for-there is no "truth."<sup>191</sup>

Nietzsche tries to show the life-negating effects of the absolute truths and values on which we build our lives. He also emphasizes the necessity of re-evaluating them in line with the requirements of the ever-changing world and creating new life-affirming values. Thus, in order to encompass and examine nihilism in the most fundamental and proficient way, Nietzsche acquires a tool to analyze how, thanks to the will to power and perspectivism, values expressed as absolute truths are produced as a result of the interpreter's point of view.

To summarize, I have tried to problematize the tools Nietzsche uses to diagnose the devaluation of values and to re-evaluate values against the danger of nihilism. The creation of new values can only be achieved through genealogical means, by destabilizing life-denying and degenerating values and paving the way for new values, and by psychologically freeing drives from moral evaluation and purifying them of resentment by making them life-affirming on a new plane. In addition, life-affirming values will be possible by being freed from supersensory and beyond-world conceptions with the naturalization project and by ceasing to interpret forces as reactive in terms of the will to power. Thus, it becomes clear why it is crucial and necessary to analyze and explain these tools to understand how Nietzsche, as a physician, diagnosed nihilism and how he tried to remedy it.

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<sup>191</sup> WP §616

## CHAPTER III

### DIAGNOSIS: NIHILISM AS A DISEASE

#### 3.1. Conceptual Framework of Nihilism

The concept of nihilism is derived from the Latin *nihil*, meaning nothingness, and goes back to the roots of the history of Western thought. On the one hand, in Western philosophy, the term nihil is taken as the principle of identity (*ex nihilo nihil fit*), positioned in opposition to being in Parmenides, and on the other hand, in the Christian tradition as the expression of God's power (*creatio ex nihilo*). The relationship between nothingness and being is established in a very fundamental place in the Christian faith; since God created out of nothing, the value of being is not in itself and expresses a temporary secondary process framed by nothingness. In other words, the reality of life is contingent in comparison to the reality of God; it is founded on the ground of nothingness from the very beginning; therefore, it would have no value in the absence of God. However, the shifts of meaning in the historical adventure of the concept of nihilism are quite diverse: as an expression of accusation, as disbelief, as a revolutionary title. Meysenbug mentions a community in St. Augustine's time whose aim was to negate and destroy everything that exists: "In the year 382 A.D. St. Augustine wrote: "*Nihilisti apellantur quia nihil credunt et nihil docent.*" (Called nihilists because they believed nothing and taught nothing)"<sup>192</sup> In the 12th century, the Catholic Church branded as heresy a doctrine called 'nihilianism,' which claimed that Jesus, taken humanly, was nothing and therefore not human, but fully divine.<sup>193</sup> The concept of nihilism has been the subject of a philosophical debate at the heart of post-Kantian metaphysical debates. Jakob Hermann Obereit, in his 1787 work, depicts Kant's claim about the limits of human reason and the unattainability of knowledge of the thing-in-itself as metaphysics in danger of nihilism. According to Obereit, nihilism in this respect is the blocking of the path to salvation and human surrender to a meaningless life by being alone with the phenomenal realm, which is already a realm

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<sup>192</sup> Transmitted by Malwida Freiin von Meysenbug, "*Der Lebensabend einer Idealistin*" (2018). Prose Nonfiction. [https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sophnf\\_nonfict/63](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sophnf_nonfict/63) §31.

<sup>193</sup> James Tartaglia and Tracy Llanera, *A Defence of Nihilism* (Routledge, 2021), 13.

of nothingness.<sup>194</sup> However, the philosophical use of the term nihilism was the result of the debates between Fichte and Jacobi. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, who was known to be in contact with Obereit in his correspondence with Fichte, characterized the conception of the 'I' in Fichte's idealism as a constitutive element at the basis of everything as nihilism.: "Truly, my dear Fichte, it should not grieve me if you, or whoever it might be, want to call chimerism what I oppose to idealism, which I reproach as nihilism."<sup>195</sup> Although the idea of the constitutive subject was also found in Descartes as cogito, he did not face the accusation of nihilism because God was the guarantor of knowledge and existence in his philosophy. However, since Fichte's idealism dealt with reality based on the subject without recourse to God, it could not escape the characterization of nihilism; thus, in a sense, nihilism is used synonymously with atheism. On the other hand, with the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, the concept was transformed, and nihilism emerged as a political concept, especially in Russia. In this sense, nihilism refers to a science-based struggle to destroy existing values in order to abandon obsolete institutions and dysfunctional beliefs with great objection and disbelief towards tradition and to pave the way for building a new world. Thereby, the term continues to be used as a kind of accusation of atheism, an expression of condemnation and contempt, while on the other hand, it has become a revolutionary title as a form of liberation. Nietzsche became acquainted with this form of nihilism as a belief in unbelief through Russian literature, especially with Turgenev and Dostoyevsky.<sup>196</sup> However, beyond all these definitions, the concept of nihilism gained its common meaning with Nietzsche's philosophy in relation to the meaning of life and values. In this sense, nihilism was first discussed by Nietzsche regarding the crisis of the hitherto valid metaphysical interpretation of reality in terms of man's relation to the world or the loss of the status of existing values.

To encompass and properly comprehend the concept of nihilism, it is necessary primarily to identify, through genealogy, the masks it has adopted in the present and the past, as well as to demonstrate which feelings or drives it emerges as a reflection of in the psychological dimension, and furthermore, which forces it is the result of in

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<sup>194</sup> James Tartaglia and Tracy Llanera, *A Defence of Nihilism*, 17.

<sup>195</sup> Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche* (The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 65.

<sup>196</sup> Paul van Tongeren, *Friedrich Nietzsche and European Nihilism* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 16.

the physiological layer and from which perspectives it realizes itself. Nihilism is the name for the dissolution of the values and ideals that make up Western cultural history, the shaking of the foundations of the philosophical, moral, and religious spheres that dominate life, and the disappearance of the ground that answers all questions about the meaning of life. The elements that serve to make sense of and account for life with reference to themselves have lost their value and become dysfunctional. It also means the fragmentation of the horizon of principles that justifies practices, legitimizes actions, and shapes world experience. Hence, it has become problematic for human beings to embrace life in all its aspects, to consider the world as a dwelling place, and to feel confident; from this point of view, human beings have remained aimless and directionless on Earth. Furthermore, life itself stands as a problem in front of human beings, and in this way, human beings become alienated from their own existence and their relations with all kinds of others by being deprived of values that would make sense of the necessity of life and the conditions of their own existence. In this regard, nihilism is the revelation that the values we have constructed to frame life cannot be realized in this world, that they do not have the kind of foundation we had hoped for; from this perspective, it is the experience of suffering the loss of the truths that we cannot have and cannot reach.<sup>197</sup> In his unfinished work *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche describes this situation as “that the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; “why?” finds no answer.”<sup>198</sup> However, devaluing values does not mean that they become inferior values, but the revelation that our value frameworks are meaningless, that life does not correspond to the values we assign to it.<sup>199</sup> Nihilism refers to an experience, but on the other hand, the degeneration, immorality, physiological exhaustion, and psychological pessimism that arise in this experience are not its causes but its consequences: “Nihilism stands at the door: whence comes this uncanniest of all guests? Point of departure: it is an error to consider “social distress” or “physiological degeneration” or, worse, corruption, as the cause of nihilism.”<sup>200</sup> This indicates that the emergence of nihilism should not be sought in terms of symptoms but more fundamentally elsewhere, and that is the ascetic values of Christian morality that lie at the heart of Western history. Nihilism is an uncanny

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<sup>197</sup> Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze* (Routledge, 2002), 19.

<sup>198</sup> WP §2.

<sup>199</sup> Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (Columbia University Press, 2005), 14.

<sup>200</sup> WP §1.

guest because it is that which we hope will never return, that which we think we have overcome, and in this respect, it marks the return of that which we have tried to forget and repress. Therefore, nihilism, as we have tried to discuss it here, is not a doctrine advocated by someone, an intellectual teaching, or a social movement, nor is it a historical phenomenon marking a specific period, but nihilism constitutes the whole essence and lawfulness of the characteristic structure of Western philosophical-cultural history. As Heidegger points out, if we take this history as a process of devaluation of values, nihilism is not the cause of it but its inner logic.<sup>201</sup> In this respect, nihilism as a historical destiny is a process that shapes the history of Western cultural thought and necessarily reveals itself. However, besides this, nihilism does not represent a deviation, a going astray, but a way of relating to life that is inherent in human existence and has continuously been at work on all kinds of grounds throughout history. Thereby, nihilism is understood to be related to values themselves and the way they are constructed:

For why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals-because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these "values" really had.- We require, sometime, new values.<sup>202</sup>

On the one hand, as Nishitani points out, nihilism emerges as a problem inherent to human existence independent of time and space; man is unable to find a basis for his own self, and on the other hand, it is a problem on the constitutive ground of sociality, which historically manifests itself in the flow of culture.<sup>203</sup> Thereby, nihilism is associated with the evaluation of the conditions of life by a type of human being who produces a metaphysical thought that has ascetic ideals at its center, whose roots go back to Socrates and continue to encompass Christian morality, which is the publicized form of Platonism. In this context, it is important to distinguish between the historical course of nihilism as experienced along the Western philosophical route and the logic of its functioning. This situation corresponds to the historically operating process of genealogical origin, and the difference opened in origin. In other words, nihilism, which conceals itself through values in its historical formation, and nihilism, which

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<sup>201</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche IV: Nihilism*, translated by David F. Krell (Harper & Row, 1991), 53.

<sup>202</sup> WP Preface §4

<sup>203</sup> Keiji Nihitani, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, trans. by Graham Parkes (State University of New York Press, 1990) 3.

inevitably reveals itself through the devaluation of values, must be treated as interrelated but independent.

To understand this genealogical ambivalence, it is helpful to refer to Richardson's distinction between "no-value" and "no-to-life," which he describes as the two poles of nihilism.<sup>204</sup> In this respect, on the one hand, there is the concealed nihilism of classical metaphysics that negates the world and the body that we experience in becoming (no-to-life nihilism), and on the other hand, there is the nihilism in which we encounter a world without value by revealing that these values have no reality (no-value nihilism). Thereby, there are two basic historical nihilistic situations: values without a world (values that are world-denying) and a world without values.

Nihilism, in its first form, does not represent nothingness in the sense of the opposite of what exists but rather the evaluation of life through the value of nothingness.<sup>205</sup> In other words, it points to the dominance of values that deny life and characterize it as worthless, together with the idea of a beyond-world founded on metaphysical principles, and in this sense, the very existence of values is nihilistic. As Heidegger puts it: "Nihilism is not only the process of devaluing the highest values, nor simply the withdrawal of these values. The very positing of these values in the world is already nihilism."<sup>206</sup> The value of nothingness frames life with transcendent values in a place that is outside of life and where no component of life (transient, finite, variable) is implicated, that is, in a supersensible way. Thereby, values metaphysically are based on the promise of a world in nothingness, that is, in the "beyond-world," while at the same time making life nothing. In other words, when value is placed on the ground of 'nothingness,' which is transcendence, life itself appears as an unreal, pale copy in reference to nothingness. Nihilistic values, in this sense, consider life as a mere bridge to the afterlife, positioning it as undesirable, and this means saying 'no' to life.

The nihilistic instinct says no, is its mildest assertion that non-being (Nicht-sein) is better than reality, that the will to nothingness has more value (Wille zum Nichts mehr Wert) than the will to live, and his strict that if nothingness (das Nichts) is the ultimate desirability, this life, as contrast, is absolutely valueless - is reprehensible<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Richardson, *Nietzsche's Value*, 244.

<sup>205</sup> NP, 147.

<sup>206</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche IV: Nihilism*, translated by David F. Krell (Harper&Row, 1991), 44.

<sup>207</sup> Nietzsche, *Nietzsche's Last Notebooks 1888*, trans. By Daniel Fidel Ferrer, 17 [7]

To put it in broader terms, metaphysical thought has divided life into two opposing spheres by searching for unchanging, stable, permanent, unitary essences in opposition to life, which is changing, finite, temporary, multiple, and diverse. As we know from Plato, the world we perceive with our senses is called the "apparent world." Accordingly, since the apparent world contains becoming, finitude, and transience, it was considered worthless as a copy of the original world, and the idea that what is valuable is the real world that lies behind the apparent world prevailed. Western metaphysics positioned one as superior to the other by placing the real world against the apparent world, episteme against doxa, reason against instinct, being against becoming, and mind against the body. The negation of the finite, becoming, change, and the reduction of experience to appearances is, in fact, the reduction and negation of life itself to "nothingness." Furthermore, the negation of life depends on the idea that it is meaningful only if it meets certain standards; in this respect, a distinction is made between what is and what ought to be in terms of the relation of value and fact and the form of what ought to be is drawn on a rational ground in relation to truth. This also means that existence is viewed from a moral perspective; becoming is seen as imperfect and bad because it involves change, while being is seen as complete and good because of its character of perfection. Christianity, a continuation of Platonism, preserved this distinction by placing the idea of the afterlife in opposition to the earth, perceiving the world we live in as an inferior place with imperfections. The way to reach the beyond world is to suppress the desires for this world, to tame the body that allows us to participate in this world and constantly misleads us, to purify ourselves of the elements belonging to this world, and that means not being oneself. Nietzsche's targeting of the Western Christian tradition and morality is related to this evaluation of life. The evaluation, rejection, and denigration of life through this 'nothing' constitute the first steps of the implicit nihilism of Western thought. This form of nihilism is based on saying 'no to life' in Richardson's terms: "To "say no" to life is to disvalue life, which involves assessing it by some standard whose value is presumed and by which life is found wanting."<sup>208</sup> However, in this form of nihilism, saying no to life does not take place on a theoretical ground; although its foundations are intellectual on one side, people negate life by practically realizing these values in life. The reason why human beings adopt these values is because they add integrity and

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<sup>208</sup> John Richardson, *Nietzsche's Values*, 246.

meaning to life through them, because they think that only in this way can life be lived, and in doing so, they are not aware that negating life itself, so nihilism is found hidden in values. In this sense, nihilism is not only the realization of a devaluation of life but also the result of a certain way of evaluating; moreover, it is the embodiment of a judgment about life.

One must ask why life is valued in this way and whether it is possible. For Nietzsche, the very questioning of the value of life is itself a symptom of devaluing life and considering it as a problem. In other words, to question whether life is worth living based on a question such as what the meaning of life is is to present life as a problem that needs to be gotten rid of. Whereas the value of life cannot be judged by the living who are party to it:

Judgements, value judgements on life, whether for or against, can ultimately never be true: they have value only as symptoms, they can be considered only as symptoms—in themselves such judgements are foolish. We must really stretch out our fingers and make the effort to grasp this astonishing finesse, that the value of life cannot be assessed. Not by a living person because he is an interested party, indeed even the object of dispute, and not the judge; nor by a dead person, for a different reason. For a philosopher to see a problem in the value of life is thus even an objection against him, a question mark against his wisdom, a piece of unwisdom.<sup>209</sup>

However, as Nietzsche puts it, the evaluation of life is something that every living being is obliged to do and cannot do without: “Whenever we speak of values, we speak under the inspiration—from the perspective—of life: life itself forces us to establish values; life itself evaluates through us when we posit values.”<sup>210</sup> On the other hand, one must ask who is it that evaluates life in this way. In other words, from what perspective and as a form of the will to power is life evaluated in this way, and what drives and forces are active in the evaluator? Moreover, what does this assessment of life tell us about the circumstances of the person judging it? From a psychological point of view, Nietzsche says that this way of thinking is based on not accepting the world as it is, seeing life as a mistake and a disease that needs to be corrected: “Something should have been different.”<sup>211</sup> In other words, a nihilist thinks that the world shouldn't be this way and wishes things were different than they are. Therefore,

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<sup>209</sup> TI III §2.

<sup>210</sup> TI V §5.

<sup>211</sup> WP §333

the main reason for this understanding of life through opposing dualities is the human suffering in the face of infinite change, diversity, and difficulty in life and the desire to reach an explanation that can make sense of one's own existence and to know what all existence is for: "One longs for a condition in which one no longer suffers: life is actually experienced as the ground of ills."<sup>212</sup> In this respect, man cannot bear the meaninglessness of the pain they suffer in life; they desire something to have a meaning worth wanting; in this respect, he "prefers to will nothingness rather than not will"<sup>213</sup>; that is, they produce what is to be wanted on the ground of nothingness, this is related to the fear experienced in the face of the idea that there is no meaning in life in general and not accepting the conditions of life. In this sense, nihilism manifests itself as the hitherto hidden essence of the Western cultural tradition, as the negation of finitude resulting from weakness in the face of life. In other words, human suffering, the inability to satisfy one's desires, and the awareness of one's own finitude are made meaningful through a value that justifies this situation; nihilism, in this sense, is the attempt to avoid the pain in life, the endless struggle and opposition of forces, and moreover to accept an ascetic life in search of a world without pain. Therefore, by surrendering to his own powerlessness, the nihilist primarily does not want to face reality in the state of becoming; moreover, instead of accepting this world, he builds other worlds in order to escape from it. In this case, there is an important drive that is effective for the person who suffers, and that is resentment. Resentment is a desire for compensation and equality in return for suffering. For this reason, nihilist attributes transcendent integrity and an objective purpose to the world in order to give it meaning. To make a judgment for or against life, it is necessary to appeal to a position outside of life, and this position is provided by God, who is outside of life, that is, outside of becoming. From this point of view, it becomes clear what kind of a person's way of life the negative evaluation of life is the result of: "It follows from this that even that antinature of a morality which conceives of God as the antithesis and condemnation of life is merely a value judgement on the part of life which life? What kind of life?—But I have already given the answer: declining, weakened, tired, condemned life."<sup>214</sup> Therefore, 'no-life' nihilism is the result of the need for an authority superior to oneself, based on one's own powerlessness, and the type of person

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<sup>212</sup> WP §44.

<sup>213</sup> GM III §1.

<sup>214</sup> TI V §5.

who desires a smooth and painless life without illusions. Starting from the fact that life constantly misleads and deceives us, they believe that the world we live in should not be a place of existence full of illusions and suffering and that there should be a real world outside of it. The result is alienation from oneself, one's living conditions, and the world.

What leads to this "should be" judgment is the logic of human consciousness that shapes the way of thinking in terms of opposites and the search for truth that applies to everything. In this sense, the instinct of truth is the search for a ground that is infallible against the constant deception of the senses and the body and the dangers they pose to human beings; in this respect, he is driven by the urge not to deceive even oneself. The desire not to deceive oneself is established through impersonal universal objective truths whose guarantor and embodiment is the idea of God. However, this search, in the end, undermined the ground on which it was based and revealed that the values of the Christian moral tradition regarding life were not real. To put it another way, the fact that there is no overarching meaning to life, no objective truths, no principles that apply to everyone, and no purpose that guides life has become clear. As Simon Critchley said: "There is an antinomy or antagonism within nihilism, namely that the Christian—Moral interpretation of the world is driven by a will to truthfulness, but that this very will to truth eventually turns against the Christian interpretation of the world by finding it untrue."<sup>215</sup> Therefore, no-to-life nihilism is both the constitutive element of ascetic values that devalue life and the self-destruction of those values. In Nietzsche's philosophy, this is expressed as "God is dead". The death of God is not only the loss of faith in the god of a religion; it is also the death of the guarantor of absolute truth, of moral truths, of man's place in the universe, of the idea that life has an objective and ultimate meaning and purpose. With the death of God, therefore, all the values that existed and prevailed within Western Christian culture have lost their value, as if man had been deceiving himself for a long time. However, it is not only transcendental values that are devalued; since ascetic values have been the only reference point by which human beings have been able to make sense of life throughout history, all the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that human beings use, all the ways in which they make sense and establish relationships, all their

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<sup>215</sup> Simon Critchley, *Very Little...Almost Nothing* (Routledge, 1997), 7.

psychological and physiological influences, in short, everything involved in human life has been determined according to these values. Moreover, in the absence of a transcendent ground on which to make sense of his life, he is left alone with the life he had previously negated.

Now we discover in ourselves needs implanted by centuries of moral interpretation-needs that now appear to us as needs for untruth; on the other hand, the value for which we endure life seems to hinge on these needs. This antagonism-not to esteem what we know, and not to be allowed any longer to esteem the lies we should like to tell ourselves-results in a process of dissolution.<sup>216</sup>

In this way, nihilism, which had been hidden in the tradition of Western thought, was now inevitably exposed. In fact, this way of thinking was initially very helpful in finding an adequate remedy and alleviating human suffering. However, as a result of the search for truth, which was initially set as the supreme value, grasped only by reason, it became clear that what was attributed as truth was not real but all inventions and lies that we needed. Moreover, it has turned out that values that appear to support life not only mask and conceal problems in terms of the value of life but also lead to the denial of life. Therefore, the next stage of nihilism begins with the devaluation of these transcendent values. Nietzsche refers to this as radical nihilism, in which the absolute indefensibility of existence becomes obvious: "Radical nihilism is the conviction of an absolute untenability of existence when it comes to the highest values one recognizes; plus the realization that we lack the least right to posit a beyond or an in-itself of things that might be "divine" or morality incarnate."<sup>217</sup> Radical nihilism, in this sense, corresponds to no-value nihilism in that it points to the absence of absolute values for life. Nietzsche presents three different causes of nihilism, which is experienced psychologically as the loss of unattainable values.<sup>218</sup> The first is the feeling of self-deception and wasted effort caused by the unrealizability of values; there are no longer any goals worth exerting effort for, and any effort is perceived as doomed to end in despair. The second is the sense of loss brought about by the absence of the principles of unity and wholeness that, from the point of view of cosmology, make the existence of the entire universe intelligible. The third is the loss of the world of truth, which is placed in opposition to becoming and the body; one must now live

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<sup>216</sup> WP §5.

<sup>217</sup> WP §3.

<sup>218</sup> WP §12.

in a world of becoming where uncertainty, all kinds of deception, and, above all, worthlessness reign. In this respect, nihilism is the breaking up of the transcendent, universal, and absolute web of meaning that assigns goals to human beings and the disintegration of the coordinate system that guides their lives. Thus, the criteria and scales we ascribe to life have become invalid, and it has become clear that we can no longer interpret life with the principles and foundations that are constitutive for evaluating life.

The feeling of valuelessness was reached with the realization that the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of "aim," the concept of "unity," or the concept of "truth." Existence has no goal or end; any comprehensive unity in the plurality of events is lacking; the character of existence is not "true," is false. One simply lacks any reason for convincing oneself that there is a true world. Briefly: the categories "aim," "unity," "being" which we used to project some value into the world—we pull out again; so the world looks valueless.<sup>219</sup>

The concepts of purpose, unity, and truth are essential not only because they provide us with a narrative of how the entire universe came to be and where it is going but also because they provide a framework for the position and role of the human being in the face of the vastness of the universe and the complex interrelationships and diversity of all species in the world we experience as chaos. In the absence of these principles, not only is life no longer worthless, but the transcendent values for which we have devalued life have also become worthless. However, although Christian values are discredited, they continue to exist with their masks as morality and in the field of science with the claim of objective truth. Confronted with himself and the world as the only realm of reality because of the death of God, modern man has created an anthropocentric world by turning to the power and greatness of his own 'self,' will, morality, and reason. However, the substitution of anthropocentric scientific truths and scientific facts for the classical values of God-truth-reality does not prevent the devaluation of values; on the contrary, it only makes the existing nihilism more widespread. It resurrects nihilism by placing alternative values on the same grounds, what Nietzsche calls incomplete nihilism.<sup>220</sup> If the transcendent elements that make values valuable can never be reached, then nihilism seems to be not only a historical event but also a way of relating to life that human beings continually establish. As Hatab points out: "The threat of nihilism – the denial of any truth, meaning, or value

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> WP §28.

in the world – is in fact parasitic on the Western tradition, which has judged conditions of becoming in life to be deficient and has “nullified” these conditions in favor of rational, spiritual, or moral corrections.”<sup>221</sup>

The experience of the collapse of values manifests itself as a social and spiritual phenomenon in the form of pessimism. In this sense, nihilism is a developed form of pessimism, and pessimism is a precursor of nihilism.<sup>222</sup> As nihilism is embodied, it seeps into the social and cultural rift, dominating pessimism as regression and thus emerging as increasing weariness and exhaustion. Primarily, under conditions of decadence, man, in reality, does nothing but accelerate his own exhaustion, even if he seeks some solutions: “One helps to destroy.”<sup>223</sup> However, for Nietzsche, decadence is a necessary condition of existence for life and is not something that can be stopped by man; in this sense, it is not a kind of deviation: “The phenomenon of decadence is as necessary as any increase and advance of life”<sup>224</sup> The cycle of life, which requires mutual overcoming of forces each time, also creates a state of decadence in the context of deterioration, collapse, decay and extinction in order to realize this breakthrough in accordance with its own inherent law. In other words, decadence is when the forces that ensure the continuity of life lose their functionality over time during the struggle and become resistant to life. In this sense, “decadence itself is nothing to be fought,”<sup>225</sup> but the main challenge is to push the disease away with the pathos of distance and prevent it from reaching the healthy parts of life. Although the search for truth that characterizes the Western intellectual tradition led to the death of God, the new values constructed within the framework of morality with reference to human beings, which are presented as salvation from decadence, are, in essence, a symptom of decadence. In other words, what is sought to replace the void created by the death of God is the denial of the instinctual and the will to live on a rational basis, again for the sake of the will to truth.

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<sup>221</sup> Lawrence J. Hatab, *Nietzsche's on the Genealogy of Morality* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 11.

<sup>222</sup> WP §37 and §9.

<sup>223</sup> WP §24.

<sup>224</sup> WP §40.

<sup>225</sup> WP §41.

On the other hand, an important question to ask, why is it that the absence of values, which constantly constrains us, causes us to condemn the world and alienate us from ourselves, continues to be a disaster for mankind? In other words, why has man not become free with the disappearance of transcendental values, and what is the obstacle to living as he wants and without problems, without suppressing all his impulses? The reason why the experience of nihilism persists even after the realization of the death of God is that the concepts of truth, meaning, and rightness are still accepted as the only valid criteria for life, and in their absence, life seems empty.<sup>226</sup> In other words, since the existence of values is regarded as a necessary condition for all forms of life, the revelation that they cannot be realized brings with it the conclusion that the world should not exist. On the other hand, it was the void that surrounded his existence that pushed human beings to create transcendent values, and when human beings now realize that they cannot reach those values, they are left alone with the void, or in Nietzsche's other words, the abyss.

Nihilism appears at that point, not that the displeasure at existence has become greater than before but because one has come to mistrust any "meaning" in suffering, indeed in existence. One interpretation has collapsed; but because it was considered the interpretation it now seems as if there were no meaning at all in existence, as if everything were in vain.<sup>227</sup>

The idea that life has a purpose is only possible under two conditions: that the purpose has a value and that this value is realizable. In this respect, Reginster calls the devaluation of the value of purpose the nihilism of disorientation, while the failure to realize purpose in the world the nihilism of despair: "According to nihilism as disorientation, there is nothing wrong with the world and something wrong with our values. According to nihilism as despair, by contrast, there is nothing wrong with our values but something wrong with the world."<sup>228</sup>

Nietzsche divides the ways in which radical nihilism is experienced into active and passive nihilism, where each attitude corresponds to a response to the loss of meaning; also, Reginster considers these two states as forms of nihilism of despair.<sup>229</sup> Passive nihilism is a kind of exhausted acceptance of the belief that realizing values in the

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> WP §55.

<sup>228</sup> Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 33-4.

<sup>229</sup> Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 29.

world is futile, a kind of powerless withdrawal from life. One's power against the stimuli around one's environment diminishes, and one comes to see life as futile and desires nothingness. So, they surrender to their own powerlessness and try to numb themselves: "Life is, in short, the unconditioned condition of itself. Nihilism is the result of our unwillingness to acknowledge this fact."<sup>230</sup> The main point here is that the passive nihilist does not lose faith in the existence of values; he just realizes that they cannot be achieved in this world. Active nihilism, on the other hand, is to oppose the world with the awareness that values cannot be realized in the world and to strive to destroy the values that cause it to be deceived. Active nihilism implies a state of power, but the state of being nihilistic does not disappear because the goals set by existing values are insufficient for the active nihilist; namely, he has exceeded them, but he continues to live in a purposeless existence.<sup>231</sup> In this sense, the active nihilist seeks revenge on the world for the worthlessness of life based on the failure to realize the sublime values. For the active nihilist, nothing matters, and, therefore, he strives for nothing to matter. As Reginster expressed it: "Both resignation and destruction imply a continuing endorsement of certain values: resignation is acceptance of a hopelessly evil world, whereas destruction is its annihilation on the grounds that it is hopelessly evil."<sup>232</sup> In this sense, both nihilisms are reactive and constitute manifestations of not affirming life and saying no to what is valuable and meaningful in life. However, what matters to Nietzsche is not whether life has an objective and absolute meaning valid for all circumstances but how to live or not to live in the absence of an absolute meaning. On the other hand, nihilism as disorientation is a turning away from values themselves, which are now doomed to fail: "Nihilism as disorientation, by contrast, implies a disengagement from the very values the endorsement of which underlies resignation and destruction."<sup>233</sup>

From this perspective, Nietzsche presents a dual definition of the nihilist in terms of position vis-à-vis the world: "A nihilist is a man who judges of the world as it is that it ought not to be, and of the world as it ought to be that it does not exist."<sup>234</sup> This is

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<sup>230</sup> R. E. Havas, *Who is Heidegger's Nietzsche?*, in "Heidegger: A Critical Reader" ed. By. Hubert L. Dreyfus & Harrison Hall (Basil Blackwell, 1992), 234.

<sup>231</sup> WP §23.

<sup>232</sup> Reginster, *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> Reginster, *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> WP §585A.

the nihilist's inability to find a response to his will and power, which leads him to the conclusion that all actions are futile and that the world is meaningless and not worth living in. Lacking the means to affirm and legitimize his own life, the nihilist judges life neither by believing that values can be realized in the world nor by seeing the world as acceptable as it is, and thus is left alone with his own alienation in the midst of life. With the dissatisfaction of wanting and the thought that one's efforts are in vain, one no longer wants to ask for anything; one renounces one's desire. Therefore, the nihilist's dissatisfaction leads to the belief that it is better not to live than to live, with a sense of the unprotectedness of his motives.

However, nihilism is not in itself a negative thing; it contains an opportunity to create the conditions for new forms and new modes of affirmation that can enrich life in the absence of values that devalue it. In this respect, nihilism serves as a way to break free from the alienating influence of past values while increasing one's power, encouraging one to dare to be oneself and to give meaning to the world through one's own goals. In Nietzsche's words: "It could be the sign of a crucial and most essential growth, of the transition to new conditions of existence, that the most extreme form of pessimism, genuine nihilism, would come into the world. This I have comprehended."<sup>235</sup>

In this context, another question that can be asked here is: what is Nietzsche's position on nihilism? In other words, is Nietzsche a nihilist? Seeking an absolute purpose and meaning in life itself is a nihilistic endeavor that distorts one's relationship with oneself and leads to self-alienation. In this sense, if nihilism means denying the existence of objective and transcendental values that determine life, Nietzsche is a nihilist. On the other hand, if nihilism is denying existence, thinking that life is not worth living and running away from it, Nietzsche is not a nihilist; on the contrary, he is against it. Likewise, if nihilism means not seeing any value in life, turning away from values, or being indifferent to them, then Nietzsche is not a nihilist. The question for Nietzsche is how to affirm and make sense of life in the face of the absence of universal values. In this respect, Nietzsche's aim is, above all, to try to find the possibilities of being ourselves by recognizing our human, all too human character in the midst of the alienation created by the values that surround us, and this shows that nihilism is both

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<sup>235</sup> WP §112.

danger and redemptive power, poison and cure. In other words, Nietzsche is the 'perfect' nihilist against nihilism because he not only supports the call for destruction by welcoming the devaluation of objective values that negate life but also considers this destruction as an opportunity to create life-affirming values for oneself.

To summarize, Western metaphysics has built nihilism shaped by ascetic values in search of an absolute and transcendent truth outside of life. In this sense, Western Christian cultural history has been shaped by the conflict between human beings and their natural and vital instincts. The nihilism into which Western culture has fallen as a logical consequence of decadence is nothing but the full disclosure of this decadence and degeneration. Nevertheless, decadence and nihilism did not disappear when the sublime values that negate life became worthless. The reason why the nihilism inherent in Western thought has turned into an unstoppable destiny is that the reference point of the new values created in the hope of remedying nihilism has not changed. The search for a new ground for the void created by the death of God has also turned into a search for an absolute and unchanging truth. The new values constructed again take their source from a transcendence as opposed to becoming. For Nietzsche, the crucial task is to confront the masks of nihilism and use it as an opportunity to affirm life.

### **3.2. The History of a Disease**

The nihilism of Western metaphysics is not a deviation or distortion from the history of thought but rather a manifestation of the attitude towards life that lies at the very heart of that history. The nihilist manifests itself above all in the belief that non-being is clearly preferable to being, that the 'will to nothingness' is more valuable than the 'will to life.' In this sense, the nihilist is primarily associated, in a kind of psychological and physiological way, with the experience of resentment and revenge against the humiliation and powerlessness one experiences in the face of one's striving for self-realization. On the one hand, psychologically, it is the result of emotions becoming unable to satisfy and express themselves under moral judgments; on the other hand, physiologically, it is the result of disoriented drives establishing a kind of domination over healthy drives, of the will to power becoming merely reactive, positioning itself to thwart power. The nihilist's reactionary attitude towards life and everything in life is, in fact, a form of his will to power, and in this way, he tries to increase his power

and exert power by remaining reactionary. However, the question of whether non-being is better than being is a clear indication that we are dealing here with a form of decay, with a peculiarly diminishing vitality, decadence. Then, nihilism manifests itself as a search for a remedy against the suffering in the face of life and the meaninglessness that surrounds human beings. In this respect, it is necessary to deal with how the activity of making sense of life takes place for the nihilist and how ascetic values are produced along with the resentment that emerges as a result of his relationship with pain. In other words, to analyze the historical course of nihilism, it is first essential to turn directly to the nihilist and how he evaluates his own conditions while producing values against life. In this point of view, meaning and pain, which constitute a problem in the nihilist's relationship with life, should be discussed in relation to psychological and physiological layers.

### **3.2.1. Suffering and Meaning**

In accordance with the naturalization project, Nietzsche refers to human beings as human animals many times in order not to position human beings separately from other living beings and to point to the evolutionary process of becoming. In this sense, human beings are not the most perfect and developed species in nature; they are not the ultimate purpose of the whole organism or the shadow of God on earth as the '*imago dei*.' However, there is a gradual difference between humans and animals since suffering is a constitutive aspect of human beings. As Conway points out: "The human animal is distinguished from other animals largely on the strength of its unrivaled capacity to endure self -and Other- induced suffering."<sup>236</sup> Nietzsche's fundamental relationship between meaning and suffering was inspired by Schopenhauer's idea of the failure of the will that drives life toward self-satisfaction and self-realization. On the one hand, man's desires suffer for the goals they do not achieve, and on the other hand, when they do achieve their goals, they remain aimless and continue to be disastrous for him.

The ceaseless efforts to banish suffering achieve nothing more than a change in its form. This is essentially want, lack, care for the maintenance of life. If, which is very difficult, we have succeeded in removing pain in this form, it at once appears on the scene in a thousand others,

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<sup>236</sup> Daniel W. Conway, *How We Became What We Are: Tracking the "Beasts of Prey"*, in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals Critical Essays*, Edited by Christa Davis Acampora (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 306.

varying according to age and circumstances, such as sexual impulse, passionate love, jealousy, envy, hatred, anxiety, ambition, avarice, sickness, and so on. Finally, if it cannot find entry in any other shape, it comes in the sad, grey garment of weariness, satiety, and boredom, against which many different attempts are made. Even if we ultimately succeed in driving these away, it will hardly be done without letting pain in again in one of the previous forms, and thus starting the dance once more at the beginning; for every human life is tossed backwards and forwards between pain and boredom.<sup>237</sup>

In this respect, for Schopenhauer, the will always undermines itself; it causes more and more suffering, and this pessimism encompasses the whole framework of life. However, Schopenhauer treated suffering as a justification for being against life and as something that renders all values meaningless. For Schopenhauer, suffering is equated with the will, and the will is equated with the human being, so one cannot escape suffering without denying oneself and the will to live. In other words, the way out of suffering is only through the suspension of the will, and happiness exists through the temporary cessation of suffering. To get rid of this situation, one has only to give up the will, in other words, to stand outside of life. As David Owen points out: “Schopenhauer’s pessimism finds its most forceful expression in his endorsement of the wisdom of Silenus: the best is not to have been born, the next best is to die young.”<sup>238</sup> However, as seen in the will to power, it is not possible to stay out of the game of life; this effort only leads to getting sicker. Moreover, in trying to point to the essence of suffering, Schopenhauer ignores the fact that historically, there have been many interpretations of it and that the understanding of suffering has undergone metamorphoses.

The issue of suffering takes place both in Nietzsche's own life and in all the layers of his thought as a characteristic feature and a guiding element of human embodiment. To put it another way, as Brian Leiter points out, for Nietzsche, suffering is the fundamental reality and existential dimension of the human being.<sup>239</sup> Suffering is a point of contact with life, a stimulus that allows life to flow and penetrate us; in other words, suffering is a condition of existence, and living is a form of being impressionable. As Ernst Jünger said: “Pain is one of the keys to unlock man’s innermost being as well as the world.”<sup>240</sup> So, suffering is a vital activity that stimulates

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<sup>237</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World As Will and Representation*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Dover Publications, 1969), 315.

<sup>238</sup> David Owen, *Nietzsche’s Genealogy of Morality*, 13.

<sup>239</sup> Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality* (Routledge, 2002), 257.

<sup>240</sup> Ernst Jünger, *On Pain*, trans. David C. Durst (Telos Press Publishing, 2008), 1.

our senses to recognize the openness of our experiences. In this sense, pain and suffering, as the most fundamental component of life, is an element that makes human beings unique and shapes the relationship they establish with themselves and others: “Everything that suffers wants to live.”<sup>241</sup> On the other side, Nietzsche states that pain is a mental judgment that the human body has made about the experienced event, that it is harmful.<sup>242</sup> In this sense, pain as a phenomenon does not exist; it is transmitted after the event has taken place in order to signify and mark negativity; therefore, suffering is a constructed interpretation. Pain is a reaction to the experienced situation, but it is a reaction that precedes the situation in question, so in this respect, one does not react to suffering. “Pain is a reaction. Thus, it appears that its only meaning consists in the possibility of acting this reaction or at least of localizing it, isolating its trace, in order to avoid all propagation until one can re-act once more.”<sup>243</sup> In this respect, suffering is not a symptom of lack as a prerequisite for human existence; it is a way of relating, and in this respect, it is how we come to terms with it that is decisive. Also, human beings distinguish themselves from nature and animals by attributing meaning to causeless suffering; therefore, suffering is the intersection of memory, consciousness, history, society, and the body. In this regard, pain is in relation to meaning that allows us to interpret life, as Deleuze puts it: “What is the meaning of pain? The meaning of existence is completely dependent on it: existence is meaningful only to the extent that the pain of existence has a meaning.”<sup>244</sup> To rebel against suffering or to try to get rid of it creates both an inevitable and an impossible dilemma for human beings because suffering transforms itself each time and manifests itself by infiltrating the human being in another form. Human beings suffer not only from the present but also from their past experiences and the uncertain fate of the future.

On the other hand, from Nietzsche's point of view, the relationship that the human animal establishes with pain is the cornerstone of its emergence on the stage of history and of the construction of all cultural and traditional formations. The whole productive potential of human beings is based on the diversification and instrumentalization of pain. For Nietzsche, our entire civilization and high culture depends on the deepening

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<sup>241</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 262.

<sup>242</sup> WP §699.

<sup>243</sup> NP, 129.

<sup>244</sup> NP, 129.

and spiritualization of cruelty, and furthermore, this cruelty is linked to the human desire to inflict pain in all his actions and to the pleasure he derives from inflicting pain on himself.<sup>245</sup> In this sense, suffering is the component of the eternal text of homo natura that accompanies its 'dangerous' formation in every layer and on which countless interpretations are piled. Starting from the capacity to suffer and the fact that others can also suffer, human beings have been able to use all the functions of pain in the most creative way. For this reason, mankind has conducted countless experiments and developed uniquely effective tools and devices to utilize pain more efficiently.<sup>246</sup> In the prehistoric adventure of the formation of culture, human beings were transformed into animals capable of making promises in order to get rid of their randomness and become a calculable and predictable being: "That particular task of breeding an animal with the prerogative to promise includes [...] the more immediate task of first making man to a certain degree necessary, uniform, a peer amongst peers, orderly and consequently predictable."<sup>247</sup> Thus, to promise means to be able to choose one's actions, to behave otherwise, and to act against one's own nature, namely one's instincts. On the other hand, the ability of man to make promises is based on the exploitation of the fact that he is a suffering being. In this regard, to realize the practice of making promises, the human being's constantly active forgetting apparatus must be crippled and made to have a memory. For Nietzsche, forgetting, as an active faculty in human beings, is a way to digest what has been experienced to restrain the ongoing conflicts between instincts by preventing the negativities from reaching the level of consciousness.<sup>248</sup> However, by developing a memory of will, man disables the ability to forget at the expense of the indigestion he will experience to justify the promises he makes. The way to develop a lasting memory is through the effective use of pain, which leaves an unforgettable mark on a person: "A thing must be burnt in so that it stays in the memory: only something that continues to hurt stays in the memory"<sup>249</sup> In this respect, mankind has developed numerous painful methods and tools, both physical and mental, with the aim of improving permanent memory.

When man decided he had to make a memory for himself, it never happened without blood, torments and sacrifices: the most horrifying sacrifices and forfeits (the sacrifice of the first-

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<sup>245</sup> BGE §229.

<sup>246</sup> GM II §7.

<sup>247</sup> GM II §2.

<sup>248</sup> GM II §1.

<sup>249</sup> GM II §3.

born belongs here), the most disgusting mutilations (for example, castration), the cruellest rituals of all religious cults (and all religions are, at their most fundamental, systems of cruelty) – all this has its origin in that particular instinct which discovered that pain was the most powerful aid to mnemonics.<sup>250</sup>

As can be seen from the relation of memory to promise-making, the function of remembering is not for the past but for the future: “Remembering the promise that has been made is not recalling that it was made at a particular past moment, but that one must hold to it at a future moment.”<sup>251</sup> By making promises, people incur debts for the future, and in order to compensate for the damage in case the promise is not kept, they again resort to the constitutive element of memory: pain. However, Nietzsche does not consider the punishment that the promisor suffers if he does not pay his debt in terms of free will in the context of acting otherwise: “Throughout most of human history, punishment has not been meted out because the miscreant was held responsible for his act; therefore, it was not assumed that the guilty party alone should be punished.”<sup>252</sup> The penalty imposed as a result of broken promises is related to the creditor's establishing a relationship of domination and the pleasure it derives from inflicting pain. In this sense, the compensation for the damage suffered by the creditor is realized through the pleasure of the pain inflicted on the debtor.<sup>253</sup> In other words, pain becomes a punishment for broken promises as a method of exchange. In this respect, people throughout history, far from our modern understanding, have seen cruelty, violence, and torture not as something terrible, but as a necessity, as a source of their own joy and sense of power: “To see suffering does you good, to make suffer, better still.”<sup>254</sup> In this sense, making a promise becomes a situation measured in relation to how much one values one's pain. As the founding element of sociality, pain has led man to acquire memory through torture, to become a responsible creature who keeps his word through the understanding of punishment and compensation, and to become a moral animal by disciplining his drives. Thus, human history is a history of cruelties, tortures, punishments, and the skillful display of suffering.

However, the relationship that human beings establish with pain changes the dimension of their socialization and causes the loss of their first nature. The externally

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> NP, 134.

<sup>252</sup> GM II §4.

<sup>253</sup> GM II §6.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

sustained economy of inflicting pain and suffering moves to the internal ground with the apparatuses of discipline and contract. In this sense, human instincts are subjected to re-evaluation by becoming dysfunctional under new conditions in the process of cultural formation. Nietzsche describes this transformation with reference to speculation about the change that the human animal undergoes in its formation in the steps of the evolutionary process. In this context, the human animal, in the process of moving from being a creature of the seas to the land, is faced with the necessity of standing on its own two feet without a foothold in the absence of the boundless water that surrounded it in the past. As a result, the human animal had to abandon the instincts it had previously possessed in the sea due to the new conditions and organize them in a new way. Moreover, with many of the instincts that guided him in the face of the new conditions becoming dysfunctional, human beings preferred to rely on the weakest instinct, consciousness. However, the old instincts of mankind did not disappear and did not stop expressing themselves but turned inward and formed the concept called the soul.

The old instincts had not suddenly ceased to make their demands! But it was difficult and seldom possible to give in to them: they mainly had to seek new and as it were underground gratifications. All instincts which are not discharged outwardly turn inwards – this is what I call the internalization of man: with it there now evolves in man what will later be called his ‘soul’. The whole inner world, originally stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin, was expanded and extended itself and gained depth, breadth and height in proportion to the degree that the external discharge of man’s instincts was obstructed.<sup>255</sup>

In this respect, in the transition from natural wildlife to cultural life in the historical adventure of human beings, their drives have been tamed to be subjected to the laws of sociality. In other words, in accordance with the 'social contract,' human beings have had to chisel, suppress, and transform the pleasure of inflicting pain, the instincts of hostility and cruelty that made them feel powerful and free in the natural world. Nietzsche considers this to be the creation of bad conscience as a decentralized and spiritualized form of suffering: “I look on bad conscience as a serious illness to which man was forced to succumb by the pressure of the most fundamental of all changes which he experienced, – that change whereby he finally found himself imprisoned within the confines of society and peace.”<sup>256</sup> Furthermore, in the war against one's

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<sup>255</sup> GM II §16.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

drives, human beings have become ashamed of being themselves and have begun to suffer from themselves:

With it, however, the worst and most insidious illness was introduced, one from which mankind has not yet recovered; man's sickness of man, of himself: as the result of a forcible breach with his animal past, a simultaneous leap and fall into new situations and conditions of existence, a declaration of war against all the old instincts on which, up till then, his strength, pleasure and formidableness had been based.<sup>257</sup>

Therefore, in human transformation into a social animal, the possibility of realizing his drives must now be discharged solely on and within himself, and he must import the pleasure of inflicting suffering and apply it to his own drives. In this respect, human beings are now looking for new internalized ways to discharge their drives and for oppositions within themselves that will create resistance for them. In other words, all human desires for revenge, retribution, punishment, attacking, resisting, seeking enemies, and cruelty will now be realized within the human being himself, among his instincts. However, according to Nietzsche, bad conscience is not merely a negative and terrible sickness for human beings; to paraphrase him: "Bad conscience is a sickness, there is no point in denying it, but a sickness rather like pregnancy."<sup>258</sup> In this sense, man has found new forms, depths, and discoveries as a sufferer and as one who delights in inflicting pain on himself. All the tools of culture and the building blocks of civilization have developed as pain has become entrenched in the field of conscience. In other words, all the sensitivities, aesthetics, virtues, and intellectual traditions that constitute the entire dynamics of culture are indebted to the relationship that human beings establish with pain through the bad conscience. However, the relationship between debt and price, which was established by the human being as an animal capable of making promises, has also been reshaped in this formation of the human being. Furthermore, for human beings, as the docile animal of culture, debt ceases to be primarily a debt to the community and becomes multilayered. The most perfect form of debt manifests itself in God. In the bad conscience, God is the owner of an unaccountable debt of human beings and existence, and in this respect, in the case of Christianity, by sacrificing himself on the cross, God not only settled all debts but also made human beings a greater debtor.<sup>259</sup> Therefore, human beings have

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> GM II §19.

<sup>259</sup> GM II §21.

positioned God against their instincts in order to effectively use the bad conscience they have created to inflict suffering on themselves as a result of their inability to express their drives.

Will to torment oneself, that suppressed cruelty of animal man who has been frightened back into himself and given an inner life, incarcerated in the 'state' to be tamed, and has discovered bad conscience so that he can hurt himself, after the more natural outlet of this wish to hurt had been blocked, – this man of bad conscience has seized on religious presupposition in order to provide his self-torture with its most horrific hardness and sharpness. Debt towards God: this thought becomes an instrument of torture.<sup>260</sup>

Thus, with the thought of being guilty, human beings experience the pain of constantly seeing themselves as deserving punishment beyond measure, of feeling the unbearable weight of debt in every event, and of experiencing themselves as an irretrievable crime in life. The formation of guilt prepares the ground for the dominance of ascetic ideals. In this sense, ascetic ideals, in relation to God, assume the dual role of both relieving the pain of debt and exacerbating suffering by keeping a tally of guilt. Thereby, the suffering in the face of life is compounded by the anguish of guilt over the existence of drives and the torment of conscience over their inability to express themselves. As Conway pointed out:

Under the aegis of the ascetic ideal, human beings blame themselves for their misery, compounding the (involuntary) suffering of the bad conscience with the (voluntary) suffering of guilt. The ascetic ideal thus pretends to still the existential suffering associated with the bad conscience by superposing upon it the surplus suffering associated with guilt.<sup>261</sup>

In this sense, the concept of God constitutes the culmination of the human capacity for suffering and pain. On the one hand, man suffers because he is guilty and indebted in the eyes of God; on the other hand, the existence of suffering is made bearable by the belief in a painless world; even more, man becomes consciously desirous of suffering. For Nietzsche, although the entire sophistication of culture and the transformation of human beings into multifaceted, profound, and sensitive creatures owe much to the utilization of the capacity to suffer, this does not provide the necessary ground for the affirmation of life. Moreover, with the death of God, this relationship that human beings have built on suffering has been faced with a re-evaluation, as in the turning inward of motives, and they have come to desire a life without pain.

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<sup>260</sup> GM II §22.

<sup>261</sup> Daniel W. Conway, *Nietzsche & the Political*, (Routledge, 2005), 14.

However, why does the human being suffer, and what is the position of suffering from the nihilist point of view? To figure this out, it is necessary to start with the Nietzschean ad hominem method, which is not to move from the values themselves but with the person who asserts them, in other words, to examine him or her directly at the psychological layer. As we discussed in the section on the will to power, it is the essential nature of life to encounter resistance in every power struggle it engages in and to realize itself by asserting its power while applying resistance to other things. Life is, first and foremost, a battlefield of never-ending struggles, a game of mutual subjugation, intimidation, and exploitation, constantly changing encounters, where danger and uncertainty reign at any moment. As İsmet Özel expressed it:

To come into the world is to be attacked. The baby cries out in pain as the air attacks its lungs. The cold attacks us, the heat attacks us. We live, we survive, by fending off the attacks of hunger, disease, fear. To be alive is nothing but to be fighting. One day, when we breathe our last breath, we have completely repelled the first attack on us. The war is over.<sup>262</sup>

In this endless struggle, human beings find themselves confronted with a life that constantly tests them with the expectations and demands of everything related to each other. Furthermore, the realization that human beings are beings-towards-death and the endless struggle for endurance in their encounters cause them to turn their lives into an ordeal and to question what they are doing all this for. In a state of exhaustion and frustration, confronted with becoming and change, he attempts to find a foundation in life that will guide his actions, affirm his differences, and stabilize his position. To put it another way, in the midst of all the chaos, human beings seek a safe harbor to make their existence special and valuable, to make sense of their finitude, and to legitimize their lives despite the pain and suffering they experience. Nevertheless, the uncertainty of life, where everything is fleeting and irreversibly disappears, and the difficulty of maintaining one's strength in the face of uncompromising struggle cause all breakthroughs to be doomed to failure without reaching a desired final position. Consequently, he cannot find in himself the basis to legitimize what he is going through and to overcome what he has been subjected to, and this leads to a feeling that being in life and making an effort is futile and meaningless. In this context, everything and every effect that man touches with his own powerlessness wounds him, and he suffers constantly in a reactive state. Nietzsche considers this situation as man's

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<sup>262</sup> İsmet Özel, *Waldo Sen Neden Burada Değilsin?*, trans. By me, (Şule Yayınları, 1995), 9.

becoming sick: “One does not know how to get free of anything, one does not know how to have done with anything, one does not know how to repulse anything — everything offends. Man and thing come obtrusively near, events strike too deeply, memory is a festering wound.”<sup>263</sup> Therefore, primarily, human beings want to get rid of their pain, to find a way to alienate it, and even if they cannot do that, they strive to make it meaningful. However, considering pain as a reaction is the result of a distorted and erroneous relationship with life, a sign of powerlessness and inability to endure life. Suffering has no intrinsic embedded value; its negative meaning is attached to it later, and this is related to its moral characterization as evil. In other words, such a view of suffering is not inherent to its nature but a kind of interpretation. The interpretation of pain in this way is not a conscious activity but an affect: “Suffering is an affect that negatively assesses itself— that feels itself bad— hence a “negative reflexive affect.””<sup>264</sup> In this sense, there is no constant, literal meaning or definition of suffering that can be understood in the same way every time. In other words, from a genealogical perspective, suffering has historically been reshaped and directed against life by many different forces for different purposes.

On the other hand, there is a greater problem for human beings than the satisfaction of their desires, and that is what suffering is for and what it means. The tragic culture of ancient Greeks experienced the danger of the meaninglessness of life as a result of their inability to find a response to their suffering in the face of the crisis of the values that legitimized their lives when their mythology began to collapse.

When Silenus has finally fallen into his hands, the King asks what is the best and most excellent thing for human beings. Stiff and unmoving, the daemon remains silent until, forced by the King to speak, he finally breaks out in shrill laughter and says: 'Wretched, ephemeral race, children of chance and tribulation, why do you force me to tell you the very thing which it would be most profitable for you not to hear? The very best thing is utterly beyond your reach not to have been born, not to be, to be nothing. However, the second best thing for you is: to die soon.'<sup>265</sup>

In this sense, Nietzsche addresses the relation of pain to human beings from another dimension, not only through pain itself, but fundamentally through the question of the meaninglessness of pain: “What actually arouses indignation over suffering is not the

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<sup>263</sup> EH, *Why I am So Clever*, §6.

<sup>264</sup> Richardson, *Nietzsche's Values*, 140.

<sup>265</sup> BT § 3

suffering itself, but the senselessness of suffering.”<sup>266</sup> However, where does this need for meaning come from? As we have already seen in the section on the will to power, the meaning of a thing corresponds to the form of expression of power that manifests and reveals itself in that thing. Meaning is the predominant quality of the purposes formed by each power's perspective, and the dominant force in something imposes its own meaning by shaping and transforming what it seizes in order to increase its power. Therefore, meaning is always related to the purposes that power sets for itself, and each force manifests itself by overpowering the other forces with which it is in relation by capturing and redirecting their purposes. In this way, old meanings are reorganized and serve new purposes or become obscured and disappear. Undoubtedly, it is an important necessity for human beings to have a purpose and meaning in life; in a way, it marks the character of their existence, but this meaning is not a permanent principle of the essence or nature of human beings; it applies to human beings as it applies to everything in life: there is no fixed, unchanging structure in becoming. In other words, meaning is not permanent; it is always imposed from outside by forces, in the sense that the meaning of something is in constant flux in becoming. This continuous game of capture and displacement within power struggles shows the multiplicity, impermanence, and transience of meaning. This reveals that meaning is historical and that it is constantly being interpreted and intertwined with multilayered and diverse interpretations. When a force lacks the power to express itself, it cannot be effective over the forces it encounters and cannot determine meaning by failing to achieve its goal. This leads to a feeling of extreme powerlessness in the reactive forces that there is no meaning worth striving for, that the meaning to be achieved is unnecessary, and that the goal is meaningless. As a result of not being able to show its own strength, it seeks a universal permanent goal and meaning that will dominate all forces, and, thus, it tries to compensate for its own powerlessness and the pain of the situation it finds itself in. In this way, the search for an externally imposed universal meaning that will encompass and determine life becomes decisive for human life. As Nietzsche said: “Man has gradually become a fantastic animal that must fulfill one condition of existence more than any other animal: man must from time to time believe he knows why he exists; his race cannot thrive without a periodic trust in life -without faith in the reason in life!”<sup>267</sup> However, a meaning and purpose that encompasses existence is

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<sup>266</sup> GM II §7.

<sup>267</sup> GS I §1

an interpretation that is doomed to failure and exists as a stepping stone for man to overcome.

Suffering is an interpretation that marks the event, and meaning is an interpretation built upon this interpreted interpretation. Therefore, meaning is an interpreted form of suffering in response to the belief that everything that human pain brings is in vain. In this sense, meaning is the result of the inevitable suffering of powerlessness and the search for a basis for continuing to live; thereby, meaning is a reaction to pain. Such meaning is established by ascetic ideals, an implicit belief that meaning cannot be found in this world.

Except for the ascetic ideal: man, the animal man, had no meaning up to now. His existence on earth had no purpose; 'What is man for, actually?' – was a question without an answer; there was no will for man and earth; behind every great human destiny sounded the even louder refrain 'in vain!' This is what the ascetic ideal meant: something was missing, there was an immense lacuna around man, – he himself could think of no justification or explanation or affirmation, he suffered from the problem of what he meant. Other things made him suffer too, in the main he was a sickly animal: but suffering itself was not his problem, instead, the fact that there was no answer to the question he screamed, 'Suffering for what?' Man, the bravest animal and most prone to suffer, does not deny suffering as such: he wills it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, not the suffering, was the curse that has so far blanketed mankind, – and the ascetic ideal offered man a meaning!<sup>268</sup>

In this sense, as Nehamas points out, morality is the result of the interpretation of human suffering.<sup>269</sup> With ascetic values, pain ceased to be a stimulus to life and an indication of active participation in it but became evidence against it. How does suffering become evaluative and decide that life itself is not worth living? In the first place, suffering is an effect to which we cannot be indifferent; in this respect, it dominates over all other affects. In this respect, pain acts on the ground of an objectivity that extends to and surrounds all conditions: "For suffering is objectivity that weighs upon the subject; its most subjective experience, its expression, is objectively conveyed."<sup>270</sup> On the other hand, what is experienced is of such a magnitude that one would rather hope not to exist at all than to experience it; in this sense, suffering is rooted in the human condition; it is not a state like pleasure that can be partially experienced and separated from it. Because man cannot get rid of the pain

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<sup>268</sup> GM III §28.

<sup>269</sup> Alexander Nehamas, *The Genealogy of Genealogy*, in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Edited by Christa Davis Acampora (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 59.

<sup>270</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, Translated by E.B. Ashton (Continuum, 1973), 18.

he is experiencing, he searches for a reason to blame it on. Since it is through the body that pain is caused, it is directed towards taming its own desires and drives, and even if this causes it pain, the pain is now shaped in the name of a higher meaning. Ascetic values reinterpret suffering, reorienting it towards a new purpose in order to gain mastery over the drives. In this respect, values are based on erroneous interpretations of suffering that are mistranslated and transferred to consciousness. In this sense, ascetic values that negate life claim, first, that every event that takes place in life has a meaning that is independent of human beings and encompasses them; second, that within all this chaos lies a purpose that gives integrity to everything; and finally, that existence is a deception, and that the real world exists beyond it.

Because of his own weakness, the nihilist desires a safe, secure, and happy life without danger, in which he can always avoid suffering; moreover, he wishes to eliminate suffering altogether. According to Nietzsche, happiness is not an argument in favor of determining the value and meaning of life, nor is unhappiness a counterargument.<sup>271</sup> The goal of human beings is not the pursuit or striving for happiness, which is often expressed in philosophy as an end goal.<sup>272</sup> In this respect, happiness is not a criterion in itself to legitimize and justify existence. Happiness for life is merely the feeling of overcoming the will to power in relation to the resistances it encounters and of increasing its power. On the other hand, Nietzsche considers evaluating life within the duality of pleasure and pain as a sign of weakness. Therefore, the criteria of pleasure and pain are secondary and auxiliary elements to be underestimated.<sup>273</sup> Pleasure and displeasure are merely a consequence only in terms of power relations, and what is decisive for human beings is the increase in power and their attitude to power relations. Pleasure and pain are not opposites; both have their origins on different grounds, but human beings have positioned them as opposite phenomena out of the habit of thinking as opposites.<sup>274</sup> Then, suffering is not associated with a diminished sense of power and, in this sense, should not be perceived as a manifestation of displeasure. While pleasure expresses the increase of power, discontent is associated with the inability of power to dominate, but since a power can only increase its power through what resists

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<sup>271</sup> BGE §39.

<sup>272</sup> WP §704.

<sup>273</sup> BGE §225.

<sup>274</sup> WP §699.

it, discontent is present in every action as a component that provokes power. In this sense, pleasure and displeasure are intertwined in the will to power.<sup>275</sup> However, this quality of pleasure applies only to the strong will, while the weak will experiences displeasure as an inability to resist and respond to challenges. As a result, the weak human being wants to withdraw from the struggle against exhaustion to have a safe and peaceful sanctuary. Nietzsche argues that this kind of relationship of enjoyment is at the root of nihilism, religions, and philosophy.<sup>276</sup> In this respect, displeasure is understood in two different ways by the powerful and the powerless: one as a temptation to increase power and the other as an avoidance of the expression of power. Suffering is merely the indispensable condition of living, of acting, and the price of participating in existence as oneself. Pain is the value of feeling power, asserting oneself, and measuring oneself in every struggle of power between powers. From Nietzsche's point of view, human beings' relationship to pain is an affirmative force if it enriches their life and increases their power. People who interpret pain in a malevolent way cannot accept being themselves through weakness and want to get rid of their pain and become someone else: 'If only I were some other person!' is what this glance sighs: 'But there's no hope of that. I am who I am: how could I get away from myself? And oh – I'm fed up with myself!'<sup>277</sup> The weak man's inability to cope with his own helplessness as a result of his inability to overcome the resistance of superior power has led him to generate a sense of resentment.

### **3.2.2. Ressentiment and Ascetic Ideals**

Nietzsche argues that there is a traceable, recurring psychological factor at work underlying ascetic values and morality and that this psychological pattern is actively present in all forms of morality as resentment. Nietzsche is to establish a relationship between a certain value and the psychological type of the person who adopts it. Nietzsche takes morality as a way of evaluating a living being that corresponds to its own life: "I understand by "morality" a system of evaluations that partially coincides with the conditions of a creature's life."<sup>278</sup> In this sense, the course of the formation of morality must be understood in relation to the nature of the power that a living being

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<sup>275</sup> WP §694.

<sup>276</sup> WP §703.

<sup>277</sup> GM III §14.

<sup>278</sup> WP §256.

possesses in relation to other forces. Nietzsche focuses on the characteristics of two different types of human beings, noble/master and slave, who constitute two different morals. It is characteristic of the master that he takes pleasure in being himself in a way that is equal to his power and affirms his difference in a direct way. The master does not need an external source as a reference for his actions; he creates his own values by shaping life with the power he possesses. In this sense, the master is the one who undertakes his own existence in his relationship with life by seeing his own power as his virtue and his action as essentially good. Thus, the master acts with the idea that he is honoring life in every act of self-realization. The master's value judgments lie first and foremost in his or her ability to free his or her impulses in relation to their body and to increase his or her power by keeping himself or herself healthy; therefore, the capacity to transform and shape life through his creative power constitutes the good value judgment for the master.<sup>279</sup> In this respect, from the master's point of view, the values of good and evil are not absolute and universal; the judgment of good arises from the master's naming and commanding something as good. On the other hand, for the master, things that would pull him down and prevent him from affirming his own power and life are called bad. Thereby, they keep the distinction of their own power by developing a distance pathos that removes them from any situation that would lead to weakness.<sup>280</sup> In this respect, what is bad for the master is of secondary importance: "What is good for the master is something active, immediate, and spontaneous, arising directly out of the master's accomplishment; what is bad is a secondary judgment in contrast to an antecedent experience of self-worth"<sup>281</sup> In the eyes of the master, it is a consequence of his nature to struggle, to suffer, to show his power and violence, to dominate. The damage and injury he suffers in his struggles are valuable only as a test of his strength, and in this sense, he does not harbor any enmity or revenge in his actions. Therefore, the master's relationship with suffering is meaningful if it is necessary for him in the act of suffering and if it adds value; if it weakens him, he pushes suffering away and does not allow it to poison him. The slave's morality is constructed in opposition to the master's morality. Due to the weakness and powerlessness of the slave, he cannot create values based on himself. He perceives the master's values, based on self-realization without sparing his power, as a threat to

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<sup>279</sup> GMI §7.

<sup>280</sup> GMI §2.

<sup>281</sup> Hatab, *Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morality*, 43.

himself; in this respect, the whole focus of the slave is directed towards the existence of the master who is not like him and the virtues that are good for the master appear to be bad for the slave. The slave's powerlessness and inability to be an agent is not a defeat in the struggle of forces or an accidental temporary condition, but rather the slave's self-evaluation of himself as an irreparable weakness.<sup>282</sup> Since the slave is only in an instrumental position in relation to the master and is not recognized by the master as an agent, the slave perceives this as a personal attitude towards him. The fact that the master demonstrates his power as he wishes and creates his own values always reminds the slave of what he is not and of his own powerlessness.

On the other hand, for the master, the slave's existence is of no importance; when he rules over the slave, commands him, or even punishes him, his interest is not in the slave himself; it is only a demonstration of his power. Moreover, the master does not see the slave as a rival or enemy because the concepts of slave and enemy are completely separate. The master seeks only those who are powerful enough to be his enemy, and he does so in order to prove his power and to increase his power by overcoming the resistance he encounters, so he does not hate his enemy: "For he insists on having his enemy to himself, as a mark of distinction, indeed he will tolerate as enemies none other than such as have nothing to be despised and a great deal to be honoured!"<sup>283</sup> For the slave, on the other hand, an enemy is someone who deserves to be hated, who targets only himself and tries to make his powerlessness obvious. In this sense, there is no dialectical relationship between master and slave. In terms of the Hegelian slave-master dialectical relation, when two consciousnesses come face to face, they engage in a kind of struggle for recognition in order to reach self-consciousness. As a result of this struggle, the one who activates his power in the other in order to attain self-conscious existence becomes the master, while the one who gives up this desire and submits, fearing that his biological existence will be endangered, becomes the slave. However, the master's being master depends on the existence of the slave; in this respect, the master is incompletely recognized by someone who is not like him and who is not himself. Furthermore, the master seems to relate as a 'slave' who needs the slave to recognize him in order to be the master and the slave as the

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<sup>282</sup> Bernard Reginster, *Nietzsche on Ressentiment and Valuation*, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Jun., 1997), 286.

<sup>283</sup> GMI §10.

'master' of the master as a result of this dependence. However, this dependent relation is, as Deleuze expresses, the slave's apprehension: "The slave only conceives of power as the object of a recognition, the content of a representation, the stake in a competition, and therefore makes it depend, at the end of a fight, on a simple attribution of established values"<sup>284</sup> For Nietzsche, the relation between slave and master is not a dialectical relation of negation, but a relation of difference; the master always separates himself, turning towards his difference and affirming it.

Nietzsche states that the domination of slaves in morality begins when resentment becomes a creative and value-producing activity: "The beginning of the slaves' revolt in morality occurs when resentment itself turns creative and gives birth to values: the resentment of those beings who, denied the proper response of action, compensate for it only with imaginary revenge."<sup>285</sup> Resentment arises as a result of a special relationship that the slave establishes towards the pain he or she is subjected to. Slave searches for an agent he can hold responsible for in order to relieve the suffering he cannot resist and to direct it to a meaningful ground in order to get rid of it. It is associated with the slave's sense of inadequacy and the realization that he is unable to resist a sudden counterforce. In this respect, the slave tries to numb the pain with another feeling:

For every sufferer instinctively looks for a cause of his distress; more exactly, for a culprit, even more precisely for a guilty culprit who is receptive to distress, – in short, for a living being upon whom he can release his emotions, actually or in effigy, on some pretext or other: because the release of emotions is the greatest attempt at relief, or should I say, at anaesthetizing on the part of the sufferer, his involuntarily longed for narcotic against pain of any kind. In my judgment, we find here the actual physiological causation of resentment, revenge and their ilk, in a yearning, then, to anaesthetize pain through emotion: (...) the attempt is made to anaesthetize a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unbearable with a more violent emotion of any sort, and at least rid the consciousness of it for the moment, – for this, one needs an emotion, the wildest possible emotion and, in order to arouse it, the first available pretext.<sup>286</sup>

The slave believes that his suffering is not accidental; however, he does not establish a cause-and-effect relationship regarding the pain. In this respect, he looks for someone to be held responsible for his suffering because he thinks that what he is subjected to is a deliberate choice made by an agent against him. In this case, the resulting

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<sup>284</sup> NP, 10.

<sup>285</sup> GM I §10.

<sup>286</sup> GM III §15.

emotional experience is a feeling of powerlessness overtaking the slave, which paves the way for the formation of the desire for revenge. The desire for revenge here is not simply a reaction to the pain that has been inflicted; moreover, the desire for revenge is not actually aimed at self-protection in response to the pain. It is more about grabbing the pain and not letting go, continuing to hold on to the feeling of powerlessness that the pain gives. In this respect, the resentful person does not prevent the pain but makes it permanent by making it a part of his/her past. Nevertheless, the slave's desire for revenge cannot be directly put into action and is therefore internalized and preserved in the imagination through the dream of revenge. In this way, both the desire for revenge and the feeling of powerlessness caused by the inability to realize oneself in the slave dominate him as an indigestible fact, which cannot be discharged and therefore cannot be eliminated. Even worse, the slave will continue to be part of the power struggle of life in these affections and will, therefore, suffer further injury. This situation will again trigger the same corresponding affects in him, and he will again be unable to express them. On the other hand, resentment has a more fundamental structure, as Deleuze puts it. The resentful man, whatever the force to which he is subjected or whatever the total force of his power, acts only at the center of the reactive. The reactive is not simply reacting to the effect; on the contrary, the resentful person avoids reacting to the stimulus or rather does not react as an action but turns reactivity into an unending feeling.<sup>287</sup> The slave interprets his suffering as an insult to himself, as an attack on his dignity and position in the world. Therefore, the resentful person always takes all the forces acting on him personally, does not let the reaction pass, perceives every situation as being about him, and blames the other for not being able to direct his focus elsewhere. Moreover, the resentful person has turned into an animal that can be wounded by anything since every event he experiences points to his own powerlessness: "The man of resentment experiences every being and object as an offence in exact proportion to its effect on him. Beauty and goodness are, for him, necessarily as outrageous as any pain or misfortune that he experiences."<sup>288</sup> In this respect, the resentful person, in the first reaction, suffers because of his own powerlessness, and in the second reaction, seeing this suffering as the cause of his inability to escape the influence of the forces affecting him, he tries to take out his anger on them. Unlike the slave, the master is an active participant; he is

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<sup>287</sup> NP, 115.

<sup>288</sup> NP, 116.

truly an actor in the game of struggle, and even his reaction is a real action. The master is strong enough to react immediately to an action taken against him and to do so with a reaction that deserves self-realization, that is, with a real act of response. He does not postpone his reaction until later or wait for it to pass by putting himself on the defensive, and in this way, he gets rid of resentment as a state of poisoning: “When resentment does occur in the noble man himself, it is consumed and exhausted in an immediate reaction, and therefore it does not poison.”<sup>289</sup> Thus, for the master, the act of forgetting is always active; therefore, he quickly digests the events he has experienced and does not allow them to be internalized in a negative way. The slave, however, is vulnerable to injury and makes sense of his existence in terms of being open to attack, and only in this way does he feel that he is alive. Thus, since he does not know how to digest anything, he cannot get out of the situation he lives in and always feeds his resentment by constantly memorizing any reaction. In this respect, a resentful person is someone who tries to turn his powerlessness in the face of the situation into profit. In other words, he creates a position of righteousness by looking at its own weakness as a victimization. The evaluative act of the resentful person is based on feeling good by blaming the other person for their own bad situation: you are bad; therefore, I am good. In this sense, slaves interpret the influence of the powerful as evil and characterize their own inaction and weakness as good: “We weak people are just weak; it is good to do nothing for which we are not strong enough.”<sup>290</sup>

On the other hand, what determines whether someone is resentful or not is related to which forces are active in them. Active and reactive forces are two different types of forces that mobilize power to increase power or inhibit power to accumulate power. In this sense, being a noble/master or a slave is a quality of the will to power itself. It is the reactive forces that are active in a resentful person; thus, these emotions will poison him, and he will be surrounded by resentment as a reactive being. The role of reactivity is to try to suspend agency, and in this respect, the attempt to prevent being active in any kind of action is central in the resentful person. In other words, the slave does not engage in real agency; his agency acts only by reacting against and negating that which is outside of himself. In the strong person, where the active forces are dominant, the active and reactive forces coexist, but the strong person subjugates the reactive forces

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<sup>289</sup> GMI §10.

<sup>290</sup> GMI §13.

by putting them at his service and commanding them into action. “We can see, therefore, that a reaction alone cannot constitute resentment. Resentment designates a type in which reactive forces prevail over active forces. But they can only prevail in one way: by ceasing to be acted.”<sup>291</sup> Since slaves could not impose their will on the powerful and could not make their own activities effective, they could only play the role of a submissive spectator in life. Life is a constant creation in the struggle of forces to increase one's strength, to encounter resistance that will test oneself, to be open to change, not to avoid harm and injury, and above all, it is an irreversible activity. As life is, so the strong person wills himself, and because of his strength, he transforms life as he wishes, thus producing his own values from life. However, the will of the slave cannot will in this way; it is too weak for that, so what it always wants is to be different from what it is, to be somewhere else. The slave always considers himself as the other of life and, therefore, seeks a place outside of life. Therefore, the slave wants something other than life; he wants nothingness, which is not participating in life because life is an activity in itself. In this regard, the slave's resentment is an attempt to restrict as much as possible the conditions in which motives and life develop. As Nietzsche puts it, while the master's morality stems from saying yes to all life, the slave's morality says no to everything that is not like him, and in this way, his saying no becomes a creative act.<sup>292</sup> In this respect, the slave, because of his resentful existence, is always looking for others to stimulate his reaction to be able to act. In other words, the resentful man does not act from his own nature by not taking responsibility for being himself, but only through others to whom he reacts to continue living. He endeavors to make himself sensitive to everything to make his reaction permanent. Since he cannot be himself in any of his actions, he looks for a hidden non-self behind the actions of everyone else. In this respect, resentment should not only be understood as a relation of the slave to his master, but it also applies to all situations in which the slave enters into a relationship that points to his own powerlessness. The slave feels resentment because the past cannot be undone or corrected because life does not allow him to realize himself and, above all, because he is unable to get out of being himself.

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<sup>291</sup> NP, 111

<sup>292</sup> GM I §10.

If slaves cannot act directly against their masters and actively realize their own power, how can they exert influence over them? As we have already mentioned, the function of reactive forces is to prevent the expression of power. In this sense, the way slaves rule over masters by remaining slaves is indirectly by preventing their masters from manifesting their own power. The resentful weak have forced the strong to come to see their instincts as reprehensible and something to be renounced. To make the powerful blameworthy for being powerful and thus able to act as they wish, the resentful make the powerful believe that they have free will to choose otherwise, and they do this by making the powerful believe that this is good for them. On the other hand, the slave affirms his situation by attributing it to his free will, expressing his weakness and inability to act as a choice made for the sake of being a good person. In this way, slaves reevaluate the values of their masters, portraying their good virtues of strength as bad and their weaknesses as good. In order to do this, they claim that their values are objective and the true form of life. In this respect, slaves moralize the masters' motives by claiming that their values are objective and the true form of life. The conception of truth established with the idea of objectivity leads to the erosion of the pathos of distance that the masters apply to the slaves in order to maintain the difference between them. In this way, the slaves subjugated the masters by poisoning the purposes they set for their own power with the idea of a transcendent purpose. The position of objectivity is framed by the idea of God, a transcendent power over life that exceeds the power of the master. In other words, the resentment of slaves produces a new framework of evaluation that allows them to make sense of their circumstances and serves to legitimize their weaknesses. To avenge their direct defeat in power struggles against masters, slaves construct an alternative table of values that indirectly weakens the position of masters. While slaves invert values in order to take revenge on masters, they do so by deceiving themselves and always justifying their intentions. In this sense, their desire for revenge appears to them as justice, their inability to react is affirmed through virtues such as humility, and their inability to harm is presented as patience and forgiveness.

“We good people – we are the just” – what they are demanding is not called retribution, but “the triumph of justice”; what they hate is not their enemy, oh no! they hate “injustice”, “godlessness”; what they believe and hope for is not the prospect of revenge, the delirium of sweet revenge (– Homer early on dubbed it “sweeter than honey”), but the victory of God, the

just God, over the Godless; all that remains for them to love on earth are not their brothers in hate but their “brothers in love”, as they say, all good and just people on earth.<sup>293</sup>

On the other hand, the slave's aim in transforming values through his resentment towards the master is not to become the master because he has no consciousness of his own power to rule since he never takes his gaze away from the outside. The slave wants the master to see him in the same way as he sees the master as superior, but he does not do this by making his own power dominant over the master; he only wants to be acknowledged as superior in his eyes. Thus, the slave seeks to have his existence confirmed and recognized by the master. “So, first, he tries less to raise himself than to lower those masters; he wants to destroy these enemies, by contrast (...) with the ideally healthy will, which wants its enemies stronger.”<sup>294</sup> Slaves want their masters to obey them as they obey them; that is, not equality in existence, but equality in non-existence, not equality in wealth, but equality in lack. In this sense, the slave's reversal of values does not mean that they have internalized those values but that they have achieved a moral superiority over their opponent based on the idea that they are good. In other words, the slave consoles himself with a reactive emotional state by inferring from the master's behavior, which he sees as bad, that he is good. As Pollner said: “It is essential to ressentiment that its values are not really internalized by its subjects, who are therefore not motivated by the contents of those values for their own sake, but merely avow them with an instrumental intention.”<sup>295</sup> In this respect, the slave, in fact, attempts to suspend reality and reconstruct it, thereby projecting the situation he encounters into a moral sphere. Therefore, the slave's evaluation actually consists of imitating the master, and he does this by claiming that the only justified way of being in the world is life like his own, but he does not realize that the identity he creates is mediated by the master.

However, even if the slave reverses the values, the resentment arising from his own powerlessness does not disappear because although he characterizes inaction as good, his desires and drives continue to make their own demands. In this respect, the slave is still incapable of affirming and justifying his own existence, and his resentment, far

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<sup>293</sup> GM I §14.

<sup>294</sup> John Richardson, *Nietzsche's System*, 61.

<sup>295</sup> Peter Pollner, *Ressentiment and Morality*, in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 128.

from relieving his pain, has come to pervade his entire life. This puts the slave in a paradoxical situation because even if he causes the master to suppress his drives with a desire for revenge, he is still left with his own powerlessness as he continues to be deprived of his real desire, which is to realize himself like the master. As Ridley points out:

The "evil" nobles still oppress the "good" slaves, the "good" slaves still find their instincts remorselessly turned inward; they still lacerate themselves under the conditions that originally filled them with resentment and then turned their resentment "creative." Moreover, because they now regard the nobles as guilty for what they do, yet lack the power to make the nobles either acknowledge or pay for their guilt, the impotence of their situation, always galling, must now strike them as grotesque.<sup>296</sup>

In other words, while the slave humiliates his master's motives out of resentment at not being able to express his own drives in the face of his master, he also humiliates his own desires and thus falls ill a second time. Thus, while the slave is besieged by his bad conscience under the weight of drives that he cannot manifest, he also harbors resentment against the forces that constantly wound him in life; however, he cannot find a fulcrum to make sense of and affirm the pain he experiences in the face of this situation. Therefore, the slave's re-evaluation of values is not limited to his relation to the master; he must judge all the active forces in life in order to affirm his own existence. When the slave criticizes being active in life because of his powerlessness, he eliminates what would be a purpose for himself and curses wanting itself. But man's wanting is to have a purpose in order to get rid of the fear of emptiness (*horror vacui*), so rather than wanting nothing, he wants nothingness itself; that is, rather than remaining unwilling, he wants to destroy himself: "If bereft of life-affirming alternatives, an enervated will would eventually embrace the goal of self-annihilation, for any goal is better than none at all."<sup>297</sup> In this respect, the slave considers suffering as an argument against life, and the real problem for him is not the painful memories he experiences in life but what it means to exist and suffer in a life of suffering, which he sees as the true source of his powerlessness. As Ridley puts it: "Uninterpreted suffering is fatal to him, a standing reproach not just to the manner of his existence but

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<sup>296</sup> Aaron Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience: Six Character Studies from the Genealogy* (Cornell University, 1998) 42.

<sup>297</sup> Daniel W. Conway, *Nietzsche and Political*, 15.

to the fact of it: his problem, as a self-conscious, mortal sufferer, destined for permanent repression, becomes: Why exist at all?”<sup>298</sup>

In this context, the ascetic priest steps in to prevent the slave from denying the conditions of his own existence and perishing because of his resentment. The ascetic priest takes on the role of a savior physician for the slave, but as Nietzsche points out, the reason he knows enough to cure the slave is that he himself has the same disease. In other words, even though the ascetic priest belongs to the noble class, he suffers from the same disease as the slave in terms of not being able to realize his motives and suffering from not being himself, and therefore, they share a commonality in terms of slave resentment: “The ascetic priest is the incarnate wish for being otherwise, being elsewhere.”<sup>299</sup> Just as noble masters have dominion over slaves, the ascetic priest has authority over the drives of slaves. In this sense, the ascetic priest completes the slaves' rebellion that begins in morality by producing ascetic values that justify their resentment. The ascetic priest's task of curing the slave is twofold: first, that the slave suffers with a resentment that he cannot get rid of, and second, that he cannot find meaning in his suffering. In this context, while the slave, in his resentment, seeks someone to blame for his suffering, the priest deflects the resentment that leads the slave to destruction by claiming that it is the slave himself who causes it.

The ascetic priest, says to him, ‘Quite right, my sheep! Somebody must be to blame: but you yourself are this somebody, you yourself alone are to blame for it, you yourself alone are to blame for yourself’ That is bold enough, wrong enough: but at least one thing has been achieved by it, the direction of resentment is, as I said – changed.<sup>300</sup>

In this respect, the priest wounds the slave by making him believe that he is to blame for his suffering and then tries to heal him by filling this wound with ascetic values such as sin, debt, and the afterlife. The priest shows the slave's own being, his own body, and his desires and drives as the main source of his suffering. In this sense, he wants the slave to discipline his body and exclude his drives, that is, to abandon his being as himself. To do this, he preaches to the slave to embrace and internalize suffering for the sake of the afterlife, that salvation can only be achieved by living one's life in an ascetic way. In this way, the priest reinterpreted the pain and gave it

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<sup>298</sup> Aaron Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience*, 43.

<sup>299</sup> GM III §13.

<sup>300</sup> GM III §15.

meaning within the framework of ascetic values, transforming the slave's relationship with his pain by directing his attention elsewhere. However, what the priest does is numb the wound with a stronger poison and relieve the pain so that the priest, instead of curing the slave's illness, makes him sicker.

The priest considers life itself to be a mistake and produces values that deny it, linking existence to a position outside of it so that life is reduced to a bridge to the other life: "The ascetic treats life as a wrong path that he has to walk along backward till he reaches the point where he starts; or, like a mistake which can only be set right by action – ought to be set right."<sup>301</sup> However, how could the drives that strive to assert themselves in life become opposed to life itself? In other words, how did drives act contrary to their 'nature,' become self-negating and turn towards negating existence? Psychologically, the reason for this is that in the anarchy of motives that arise because of the inability of motives to self-actualize, the motives to preserve and improve life are struggling and active in response to the suffering.<sup>302</sup> At the physiological level, however, it is related to the desire for domination over life and all existence as a consequence of the will to power acting with resentment. In this sense, on the one hand, with ascetic values, the slave dreams of the opposite by negating the conditions of powerlessness in which he finds himself, and moreover, he wants to decide for himself how life should be so that his desire for a painless, harmless and safe world imagines a perfect life outside of becoming. On the other hand, he realizes this will by inhibiting the drives that participate in life:

For an ascetic life is a self-contradiction: here an unparalleled resentment rules, that of an unfulfilled instinct and power-will that wants to be master, not over something in life, but over life itself and its deepest, strongest, most profound conditions; here, an attempt is made to use power to block the sources of the power; here, the green eye of spite turns on physiological growth itself, in particular the manifestation of this in beauty and joy; while satisfaction is looked for and found in failure, decay, pain, misfortune, ugliness, voluntary deprivation, destruction of selfhood, self-flagellation and self-sacrifice.<sup>303</sup>

In this respect, ascetic values set in opposition to life provide a necessity for the slave's own survival, and slaves, obeying the call of the priests to sacrifice their animal nature, degrade as sin and crime all the forces that belong to life and seek to realize themselves

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<sup>301</sup> GM III §11.

<sup>302</sup> GM III §13.

<sup>303</sup> GM III §11.

in it. However, the priest aims to eliminate the threat of nihilism by preventing the slave from reaching the conclusion that life is meaningless in its relation to pain. In this respect, the figure of the priest serves a paradoxical purpose: on the one side, he assigns meaning to suffering by recognizing that the real cause of it is meaningless suffering, thus filling the void into which the slave falls and eliminating meaninglessness. However, on the other side, the ascetic values preached by the priest lead to a further denial of life and the negation of impulses, opening the door to the onset of implicit nihilism. Thus, the problem of life is overcome by devaluing life itself with ascetic values and by blocking the impulses towards it. Through ascetic values, the slave moves from the idea that his own existence is meaningless to the idea that life itself is meaningless in reference to the beyond world.

Life denial seems to stem from a dispositional preserve of discrete selfhood, so that psychological discontent, as the horizontal limit of experience and meaning, sees no alternative to “objectifying” its content as an insight into life itself. The ascetic self is able to move from “I have no meaning” to “Life has no meaning,” a projection that opens the door for transcendent projects or the (more honest) pessimistic project of sheer denial.<sup>304</sup>

Since slaves, due to their powerlessness, are incapable of creating values that justify and affirm life, they can only affirm life through impersonal, objectively determined values. In this respect, slaves adopt ascetic values that are externally imposed on them and to which they are compelled to obey, just as it happens in their position vis-à-vis masters. Therefore, what is positive for the slave in the hierarchy formed in front of God through these new values is that being a slave, obedience, helplessness, and inability to express one's power is itself a good thing. In this respect, with ascetic ideals, the slave devalues life and becomes a nihilist who wants nothing rather than nothing at all.

Ascetic values are often associated with religion, but Nietzsche's criticism goes further than that. The significance of ascetic values lies in the fact that they alone have been able to provide a stable and creative answer to the question of meaning, such that throughout human history, apart from ascetic ideals, there has never been an answer to why human beings should live or a purpose to existence itself. Thereby, Nietzsche appreciates all the diverse and creative forms of life that ascetic values have produced

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<sup>304</sup> Hatab, *Nietzsche's Life Sentences*, 110.

throughout history; it is only in this way that human beings have become profound and interesting animals. In addition, Nietzsche considers all traditions accumulated by humanity and all philosophical-religious cultural adventures as the creation of the ascetic ideal. Therefore, philosophy and science, with their desire for objectivity and truth, are merely masks used by ascetic ideals. From Socrates onwards, philosophy negated life by asserting the value of the supersensible over the sensible with the equation reason=virtue=happiness, and with Plato, the idea that life is a mistake that should not be desired has become the basic understanding of life in philosophy with the distinction between the apparent-world and the real-world. In philosophy, morally good living is always considered in relation to the guidance of reason and the taming and suppression of impulses. On the other hand, morality is so determined by the domain of reason that action itself is seen as a deficiency, and being a good person, as we know from the Aristotelian tradition, can only be achieved by reaching a perfection that does not require action. In this sense, for philosophy, the conception of objective truth constitutes the highest stage of ascetic values, such that truth has taken precedence over life, and life has become sacrificial for the sake of truth. Besides, since ascetic values are the inheritors of all teachings, science itself has continued to embody ascetic values by adhering to the belief in the truth that it constructs through absolute laws and formulas that determine beyond becoming.

### **3.3. Truth and The Death of God**

From the very beginning, the history of philosophy has been shaped by an unconditional desire for truth, and the task of the thinker has been determined as the attainment of truth, which is perceived as a constant, unchanging, identical absolute. The attainment of truth has always been seen as a value in itself and has been designated as the highest goal that human beings inherently want to attain. Moreover, truth is seen as the most necessary thing to be obtained at all costs, and all other things are of secondary value. However, as Nietzsche points out, the value of truth itself has never been investigated. In other words, why human beings want truth and why they do not want untruth or falsehood has not been made the subject of thought and evaluated: “We asked about the value of this will. Granted, we will truth: why not untruth instead? And uncertainty? Even ignorance? The problem of the value of truth

came before us, – or was it we who came before the problem?”<sup>305</sup> In this sense, if we ask in a Nietzschean way, who is the one who wills truth, or what does the will to truth tell us about the one who wills it? The will to truth is primarily motivated by a desire not to be deceived, but on the other hand, one does not want to deceive oneself either: “The will to truth could also be interpreted in this fashion, provided one included under the generalization, “I will not deceive.” the special case, “I will not deceive myself.””<sup>306</sup> But the problem here is how to determine that not deceiving is more valuable than deceiving. One is constantly confronted with situations in life in which one fails to realize oneself, often interpreting the cause of this as a mistake; on the other hand, the source of the mistake is not only oneself; life itself is constantly full of illusions, deceptions, and untrustworthiness. The person who falls into the deception of life interprets the deception itself as harmful and dangerous. Thus, resentful of what the deception of life has done to him, he refuses to participate in the game of life and makes it a moral principle that he will not deceive 'even' himself.<sup>307</sup> In this sense, the search for truth is related to the distrust of life itself and to the suspicion created by the fact that life is always changing and transforming into something else. Truth is, therefore, a drive that aims to protect life and desires to be able to offer the same expectation in the situations it encounters. Thereby, the will to truth is established by getting rid of the deception of life and wanting something that is not life, and Nietzsche interprets this as a secret will to death.<sup>308</sup>

The nature of truth is defined in terms of the coincidence of thought with facts and the acquisition of universal and certain knowledge valid for all situations. Truth indicates that life can be grasped objectively, that is, in a way that is completely free of personalities and interests. In other words, with the idea of truth, a purpose for existence was assigned, and it was thought that an objective, holistic explanation of life could be provided. The characterization of truth in terms of absoluteness and immutability must inevitably be based on the assertion that there is another reality outside and opposed to becoming, whether in the ontological or epistemological sense. Thus, as an element that determines the change that lies behind the change, it divides

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<sup>305</sup> BGE §1.

<sup>306</sup> GS §344.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

life into the visible world and the real world. In this context, the desire for truth, understood as the theory of correspondence in classical metaphysics, is grounded on the moral ground in contradiction to life: “The characteristics which have been given to the 'true Being' of things are the characteristics of non-Being, of nothingness—the 'real world' has been constructed from the contradiction of the actual world: an apparent world, indeed, to the extent that it is merely a moral-optical illusion.”<sup>309</sup> Therefore, the understanding of the true world is the result of the reactionary existence of the resentful human being and is based on taking revenge on life itself by dreaming of such a world. Therefore, truth is not only epistemological; it imposes how life should be lived through an ontological answer to how life really is. On the other hand, the logical consequence of the conception of absolute, fixed, and eternal truth is manifested in the idea of God. In the adventure of philosophy, God is both the guarantor of knowledge of the real world and the principle that makes existence possible. From the point of view of Western thought, God is positioned against existence as self-identical, necessary, and absolute in the totality of all contingent propositions when we trace back the causal relations with a logical result. Thus, existence itself has become secondary and devalued in reference to the idea of God: “The concept 'God' has been the greatest objection to existence so far.”<sup>310</sup>

In this sense, the will to truth is a constitutive element of ascetic values, but it is also what ultimately causes the values themselves to be devalued and invalidated. In the modern period, the understanding that the earth is not the center of the universe, with the changes in cosmology, has shaken the centrality of man in life. In addition, with Darwin's theory of evolution, the commonality of human beings with other species destroyed their privilege and superior position. In epistemology, Kant's criticism of the limits of reason revealed that human beings cannot relate to a ground that transcends experience and cannot attain valid, true knowledge beyond the sensual. Moreover, with historicism, the idea that there are no eternal and absolute truths and that human beings are historical beings has become dominant. In this respect, man's effort to make sense of himself and life with the concepts he has produced throughout history has become contradictory with the realization of the limitations of his own capacity to know. The revelation that we cannot attain knowledge of the Absolute and the thing-in-itself and

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<sup>309</sup> TI, *'Reason' in Philosophy*, §6.

<sup>310</sup> TI, *The Four Great Errors*, §8.

that life has no purpose in itself led to the elimination of metaphysics in Western thought. This led to the questioning of the meaning of human existence, and the redefinition of all human conceptions became inevitable. With the elimination of metaphysics, what emerges is the realization that the answers one has been searching for and trying to reach for so long are not really there at all. Hence, one feels that the belief in truth, which was initially based on the maxim of not deceiving oneself, is, in the end, deceiving oneself. The inability to attain knowledge of the thing-in-itself means the end of the guarantor of the concept of God, which, as we know from Descartes, does not mislead us, and saves us from doubt, and leads us to certainty. Thus, Western thought faced two interrelated crises: First, as a result of the search for truth, transcendent values themselves came to be questioned, and second, it became clear that transcendent values could not be realized in the world. Throughout history, the Western trajectory of thought has experienced many crises with transformations of values, but it has always been about the adoption of new truth claims. However, what inevitably happens now is that truth itself is revealed to be a lie, and the direct basis of values disappears; Nietzsche expresses this as God is dead. God, in fact, cannot die because he is a metaphysical element and has none of the properties of existence; that is, he does not have a temporal dimensional vitality. So, what does Nietzsche mean when he says that God is dead? Nietzsche's statement that God is dead is ironic in that God's death took place on earth, not in the realm of transcendence. God was already dead when he was positioned with nothingness as the highest value of values and the opposite of life, and in the process that began with the elimination of metaphysics, it was not only God himself who died, but the devaluation and death of the belief in God. Also, the statement that God is dead does not mean that God has been proven to be non-existent as a result of a metaphysical debate, but it points to the necessary outcome of a historical process. In other words, to say that God is dead is, at the same time, to place him in a historical perspective. On the other hand, it means equating the history of metaphysics and transcendental values with the history of God. The death of God is the logical consequence of faith in him and, thus, the fulfillment of the fundamental moral imperative of a truth-consecrating understanding. In this sense, the existence of God in relation to the will to truth is itself an expression of the negation of life and the escape from life itself, and his death is the completion of this negation by revealing it. As John Sallis expressed it: "As integral to Nietzsche's declaration of the death of God is the experience of God as a crime against life, God as the negation of God, God as

self-negating.”<sup>311</sup> In *Gay Science*, Nietzsche announces the death of God through the madman:

Have you ever heard of the madman who on a bright morning lighted a lantern and ran to the market-place calling out unceasingly: “I seek God! I seek God!” – As there were many people standing about who did not believe in God, he caused a great deal of amusement. Why! Is he lost? Said one. Has he strayed away like a child? Said another. Or does he keep himself hidden? Is he afraid of us? Has he taken a sea-voyage? Has he emigrated? – the people cried out laughingly, all in a hubbub. The insane man jumped into their midst and transfixed them with his glances. “Where is God gone?” he called out. “I mean to tell you! We have killed him, - you and I! We are all his murderers! But how have we done it? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosened this earth from its sun? Whither does it now move? Whither do we move? Away from all suns? Do we not dash on unceasingly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an above and below? do we not stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Does not night come on continually, darker and darker? Shall we not have to light lanterns in the morning? Do we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God? Do we not smell the divine putrefaction? – for even Gods putrefy! God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him! How shall we console ourselves, the most murderous of all murderers? The holiest and the mightiest that the world has hitherto possessed, has bled to death under our knife, - who will wipe the blood from us? With what water could we cleanse ourselves? What lustrums, what sacred games shall we have to devise? Is not the magnitude of this deed too great for us? Shall we not ourselves have to become Gods, merely to seem worthy of it? There never was a greater event, - and on account of it, all who are born after us belong to a higher history than any history hitherto!”<sup>312</sup>

As the passage suggests, the people the madman is addressing are already non-believers in God, but none of them realize what God's death means and what it could lead to. The death of God means not only the collapse of faith in the god of a religion but also the collapse of all the values and evaluation systems of an entire culture, tradition, and civilization that have been formed in the shadow of this faith. Atheists still think that the world of human beings shaped around the concept of God is only a matter of faith, so they think that removing God as the central factor and replacing it with an anthropocentric understanding will solve the problem. Moreover, they do not realize that all conceptions of science also carry the idea of truth and ascetic values. As Nietzsche put it: “Unconditional, honest atheism ... is therefore not opposed to the ascetic ideal as it appears to be; instead, it is only one of the ideal's last phases of development, one of its final forms and inherent logical conclusions.”<sup>313</sup> In fact, what dies with the death of God is precisely the belief that there are objective and universal truths that science aims at. Furthermore, the values constructed by the truth world include morally good and wrong, aesthetically beautiful and ugly, anthropologically,

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<sup>311</sup> John Sallis, *Nietzsche's Voices*, Ed. By Richard Rojcewicz, (Indiana University Press, 2023), 69.

<sup>312</sup> GS §125.

<sup>313</sup> GM III §27.

man's valued position in the world between God and animal, socially man's relation to the other, and individually, the hierarchical organization of drives in human psychology. Therefore, when the truths they presuppose turn out to be lies to which we are obliged, the idea that "everything is false, everything is permitted" becomes inevitable.<sup>314</sup> Thereby, for human beings, all the shoulds and should nots of good and right living have been rendered null and void, and human beings have no goal to aim for and no desirable value. It means the disintegration of a whole framework of meaning that attributes to human beings a valuable position in life that enables them to justify and affirm life. The death of God is, in this way, the loss of the world beyond, for which man throughout history has longed with ascetic values and of all the beliefs for which he has endured suffering for the sake of a better life. For Nietzsche, the death of God is as crucial in the history of thought as the existence of God, and in this sense, he sees it as an experience of self-overcoming: "All great things bring about their own demise through an act of self-sublimation: that is the law of life, the law of necessary 'self-overcoming' in the essence of life."<sup>315</sup> Therefore, just as the death of God is the necessary consequence of the idea of God, likewise its absolute core, the will to truth, and its shadows, morality itself, must be overcome: "Christianity as a dogma was destroyed by its own morality, in the same way, Christianity as a morality must also be destroyed, – we stand on the threshold of this occurrence."<sup>316</sup> However, with this, nihilism, which was latent with ascetic values, was inevitably revealed with the death of God: "As soon as man finds out how that world is fabricated solely from psychological needs, and how he has absolutely no right to it, the last form of nihilism comes into being: it includes disbelief in any metaphysical world and forbids itself any belief in a true world."<sup>317</sup> With the disappearance of the world of truth, Western thought is freed from the burden of a fiction that devalues life itself but is left alone with the reality itself, which it has so far devalued. However, the denial of existence has not ended because, in the absence of ascetic values, life has become despised for its meaninglessness.

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<sup>314</sup> WP §602.

<sup>315</sup> GM III §27.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> WP §12A.

### 3.4. Prognosis: The Last Man

While the understanding that transcendent values cannot be realized in the world constitutes one aspect of nihilism, the other aspect is related to the fact that human beings no longer desire to create any value. In this sense, a nihilist is not only someone who does not believe in values themselves but also someone who fails to give any value and remains unrelated to the world of values. After the death of God, Western thought tradition tried to construct new grand narratives by replacing God with man: positivism, socialism, liberalism, and modernity. As Deleuze said: “the reactive man takes the place of God: adaptation, evolution, progress, happiness for all and the good of the community; the God-man, the moral man, the truthful man and the social man.”<sup>318</sup> However, they all failed because they had to wear the mask of ascetic values, and worse, they reinforced the judgment that it is futile to assign a purpose to life anymore. Besides, replacing the old transcendental values with science is not a cure for nihilism because science cannot assign meaning and purpose to life since it lacks valuation and evaluation. The sovereign type of human being that emerges after the death of God is the last man. The concept of the last human being does not refer to the extinction of the creature called the human being, as Heidegger puts it: “The last man is the man who is no longer able to look beyond himself, to rise above himself for once up to the level of his task, and undertake that task in a way that is essentially right.”<sup>319</sup> Therefore, the term “last man” describes the final stage that man, defined by ascetic values, will reach. In a world devoid of values, it is the person who fails to give value to the world and, moreover, has no concern about it. In this sense, the last man is the one who seeks no lofty values to make life meaningful, who wants to devote himself to nothing, and who is not engaged in any struggle or commitment. Nietzsche presents the last man as the type of man who will live the longest because the last man lacks the possibility of self-transcendence and overcoming. He avoids all possible disappointments, does not want to put himself in danger under any circumstances, and is not driven by passion for anything. Like the character Meursault in Camus's *The Stranger*, the last man considers everything equally meaningful and meaningless, makes no value judgments, and says, ‘I think it's the same’ in surrender to relativism.

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<sup>318</sup> NP, 151.

<sup>319</sup> Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (Harper & Row, 1968), 59.

Nevertheless, the last man has values, but they are only average things that serve only to preserve his life, so he does not pursue high goals that would serve him to transcend himself; he only cares about happiness, pleasure, and health: “Becoming ill and being mistrustful are considered sinful by them: one proceeds with caution. (...) One has one’s little pleasure for the day and one’s little pleasure for the night: but one honors health. ‘We invented happiness’ say the last human beings, and they blink.”<sup>320</sup> In this respect, the last man prefers to numb himself in the face of a meaningless existence, to abandon himself to the joys and pleasures of life. If he does not embrace ascetic virtues and recognizes no values, why does the last man, who only wants happiness and accepts impermanence, remain nihilistic? For the last man does not consider life itself to be valuable; therefore, he does not consider it worth struggling for; he only wants to consume and be consumed by all the possibilities of life, and furthermore, in an ascetic habit, he thinks that any meaning of life can only be objective and that in the absence of this, the search for meaning is futile. In the shadow of ascetic values, human beings have created life-enhancing practices and ways of life to reach transcendent values and become like God, even though they negate life. However, the last man - the ugliest man, in Nietzsche's words - is deprived of such activities on behalf of himself because he has killed God. In this sense, he does not set goals for himself; he does not desire a creation that will evaluate life and add value to it. Nevertheless, the last man welcomes this situation and sees it as the most perfect destination for human history to reach:

Because history is progress, the last man knows himself to be superior to everything that has gone before; he surveys the past from the vantage point of its fulfillment and gathers what is interesting or useful while proclaiming it primitive or preparatory to himself. He is that "Posterity" of which past generations dreamed and for the establishment of which they sacrificed themselves. He lives the humanism that survives the death of God; but he does so modestly, tending to his health and avoiding strenuous extremes. Through the avoidance of extremes, equality prevails among last men, for there are neither rich nor poor, ruler nor ruled; uniformity prevails, and the one who feels differently goes of his own accord into the madhouse, the appearance of a deviant need being self-evidently the outbreak of a treatable madness.<sup>321</sup>

The last man adopts a cynical attitude in existence; he is not genuine in anything he does, and he does not value any situation he encounters. Life is a pastime for him; no value is sacred, everything is permitted, every boundary can be violated at will, and

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<sup>320</sup> *Z Prologue* §5.

<sup>321</sup> Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching* (Yale University Press, 1986), 25.

every experience is characterized by sarcasm. Thinking only that life is futile, he lingers in this void and runs away from himself. No victory is too important for him, no effort is too precious, and every argument is quickly reconciled, “otherwise, it is bad for the stomach.”<sup>322</sup> In this respect, his life is a suspended life; he can neither affirm nor negate; he does not want to take anyone's side and, therefore, does not take life seriously:

He has lost any serious engagement with the issue as well as the time to spend on it: he is cheerful, not for lack of needs but for lack of hands to grasp his neediness. The obliging manner in which he typically approaches things and experiences, the sunny and natural hospitality with which he accepts everything that comes at him, his type of thoughtless goodwill, of dangerous lack of concern for Yeses and Noes<sup>323</sup>

So the last man is the one who does not suppress his drives but in no way takes responsibility for them. His relationship with drives is based solely on satisfying them in the quickest and shortest way. He cannot establish a direct relationship with himself; he does not undertake to be himself in life and lives as ‘das man,’ in Heideggerian terms, that is, as everyone else. He finds his life meaningful to the extent that it resembles the lives of others. He does not act as the sole agent in his actions; he avoids any confrontation with himself by keeping every step in the path of the herd. The last man knows that life is unbalanced and imperfect from beginning to end, but he does not want to see deficiencies, suffering, and mistakes in his own life. He abhors all dangers and seeks to purify life of imperfection by equalizing all that is unequal in life, by bringing it into line, and by eliminating hierarchies. In this sense, the last man aspires to transform not only himself but also nature, perceiving every obstacle in nature as a threat to his happiness. Suffering has been the most fertile ground in human history, both in terms of ascetic values and prehistory, enabling human beings to overcome and deepen themselves and to produce values that will make life meaningful. However, the last man is obsessed with pain, has a low pain threshold, and is very fragile, so he has adopted a life that excludes pain from everywhere and avoids anything that might hurt him. To avoid pain and disappointment, he also removes from his life all the factors such as love, trust, faith, all the factors through which he can properly connect with other people. If there is no other world where there is no suffering, then in this world, he develops his technique and science in such a way

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<sup>322</sup> *Z Prologue* §5.

<sup>323</sup> BGE §207.

that it serves only to eliminate the suffering that can occur in existence. Yet he fears being alone with the reality of being himself and can only escape this pain by numbing himself: “A bit of poison once in a while; that makes for pleasant dreams. And much poison at the end, for a pleasant death.”<sup>324</sup> So, the last man continues to see life as a mistake, but he does so with a great indifference to life and a preference for a purely utilitarian and cynical life.

Although the nihilism that becomes apparent as a result of the destruction of values seems to condemn humanity to the fate of the last man, for Nietzsche, it can serve as a preparatory step for the attempt to overcome nihilism and transform human engagement with life. In other words, nihilism can serve as an opportunity to recognize alienation from the world and to re-evaluate values. Nihilism is a disease that has infected the history of Western thought and the history of humanity in general, but it can be cured by the disease itself: “A philosopher recuperates differently and with different means: he recuperates, e.g., with nihilism. Belief that there is no truth at all, the nihilistic belief, is a great relaxation for one who, as a warrior of knowledge, is ceaselessly fighting ugly truths. For truth is ugly.”<sup>325</sup> In this sense, it can function as both poison and medicine. Overcoming nihilism is a process of re-evaluation that will affirm and justify life instead of bankrupting objective and universal truths. To create values that can determine one's direction in the face of life, set boundaries, and thereby make one's own life meaningful, the initial form of evaluation must first be identified and eliminated. This can only be described as a kind of paradigm shift. Simply trying to justify and repair the anomalies within the paradigm only deepens the crisis and postpones the problems. Therefore, a new world of values that rejects the previous accumulation must be built, and this requires a reassessment of values. In other words, the grounds on which values are positioned must also be destroyed.

Discovering new horizons and inventing truths that actively interpret one's own will to power is not only a movement toward the future but also a movement of transcending the past by bearing responsibility for it. Nietzsche reveals the activity of human self-overcome with the concept of the overman. The overman will reevaluate existing values and affirm the tragic condition of existence within becoming without

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> WP §598.

resorting to transcendent values. The affirmation of existence is possible by experiencing life itself as an eternal recurrence and loving one's destiny. In this way, human beings will have a new horizon of philosophizing and will be able to use nihilism as an opportunity within the framework of the values they create for themselves.



## CHAPTER IV

### TREATMENT: NIHILISM AS AN OPPORTUNITY

#### 4.1. The Overman

Although the overman is one of the most prominent concepts when it comes to Nietzsche, it is, in fact, rarely mentioned outside of the text of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and even there, it is not a concept that is elaborated on throughout the entire text. However, this does not mean that Nietzsche gives up on the overman project and does not lose its central position in his thought because Nietzsche conveys the concept of the overman in the focus of the transformations and experiences Zarathustra will encounter throughout his adventure. The overman, in combination with the concept of eternal recurrence, which is the highest principle of affirmation, is offered as a gift through Zarathustra in response to the crisis of nihilism that arises in the face of the destruction of values. Nietzsche's choice of Zarathustra as the main character is not random. Historically, the figure of Zarathustra is the one who initiated the mistake of creating objective and universal moral values of good and evil, and since he knows these values intimately, Nietzsche demonstrates the task of overcoming and going beyond morality through the person who created it.<sup>326</sup> In this respect, the Zarathustra character is one who, in his temporality, takes responsibility for his own past and moves towards an overcoming activity towards the future, just as a power has to put on the mask of the forces it has conquered. However, this does not mean, as is often confused, that Zarathustra is Nietzsche or the overman. As Heidegger points out: "Zarathustra is merely the teacher, not the over-man himself. In turn, Nietzsche is not Zarathustra, but the questioner who seeks to create in thought Zarathustra's essence."<sup>327</sup> Nietzsche introduces Zarathustra as the teacher of the overman and eternal recurrence:

"I teach you the overman." Human being is something that must be overcome. What have you done to overcome him? All creatures so far created something beyond themselves; and you

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<sup>326</sup> EH, *Why I am a Destiny*, §3.

<sup>327</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Who Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?*, in *Nietzsche Volume II*, translate by David Farrell Krell (Harper & Row, 1991), 216-217.

want to be the ebb of this great flood and would even rather go back to animals than overcome humans?<sup>328</sup>

The concept of human being, as defined in classical metaphysics, was established in relation to the concept of God, and with the death of God, the concept of human being became invalid and worthless. Since human beings can no longer consider themselves as a being between the animal and God, they must now recognize themselves as a being between the animal and the overman, a being who will appreciate and determine their own being. Here, however, the question that stands in front of him is whether he will transcend himself and embark on the overman path through his own creativity or whether he will downgrade himself and sink into animality. Nietzsche puts forward the overman in response to the last man type dominated by nihilism, which became manifest in the crisis of values: “The antithesis of superhumans is last humans: I created one at the same time as the other.”<sup>329</sup> However, this opposition is not part of a dialectic. The overman is not a figure that can destroy the last man, but it can only be reached by overcoming the last man himself. In other words, the overman is not suddenly born into the world; one can enter the path of the overman by going through the ascetic values of the past and the processes of devaluation revealed by nihilism, experiencing and overcoming all these negations of life. The reason why Nietzsche creates the overman and the last man at the same time is that the first is a horizon for man to re-evaluate his possibilities, and the second is a degenerate state from which man must develop a pathos of distance. Since the last human being exists in the character of nihilism, the overcoming of the human being also contains the possibility of overcoming nihilism. The last human being believes that there is a universal definition called humanity, and thus, both equalize all human beings and take refuge behind universality by getting rid of their own individuality. They believe that humanity will no longer undergo any transformation after them, that there is no need for new creations, and therefore, humanity as rational beings has reached a final state of stability and identity. In contrast, Nietzsche does not give a fixed and universal definition of the overman that can be valid at all times; instead, he depicts it through metaphorical expressions such as lightning, river, cloud, madness, and bridge, which

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<sup>328</sup> Z, *Prologue*, §3.

<sup>329</sup> Nietzsche, *Unpublished Fragments from the Period of Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Summer 1882–Winter 1883/84)*: Volume 14, Translated by Paul S. Loeb and David F Tinsley (Stanford University Press, 2019), 4[171]

can be constantly reinterpreted and transformed. Based on the concept itself, "over" can be defined as the expansion and overcoming of the possibilities of man himself. Nietzsche often used the concept as an adjective or adverb outside the text of Zarathustra. This has led to a debate among Nietzschean commentators as to whether the concept of the overman is an ideal type (e.g., Danto, Kaufmann, Schacht) or an ideal attitude (e.g., Bernd Magnus). For Nietzsche, the overman is a concept that is always in a state of flux, acting in the novelty of continuous becoming, like life itself, and constantly moving towards self-overcoming by keeping its possibilities alive. In other words, since human beings cannot define themselves as the essence of any transcendence, and since they cannot construct themselves once and always position in the same stability, they must constantly invent themselves in immanence and determine over and over again by realizing their existence. Therefore, the concept of the overman is not the final stage of evolution, another stage of the human species, or some kind of ideal of a perfect being.<sup>330</sup> Also, overman is not a kind of new Aristotelian classification in the hierarchy of human beings or living beings. In this sense, the concept of the overman does not refer to a specific individual but defines a way of life and an attitude towards life.<sup>331</sup> Nietzsche turns the vertical relationship horizontal and considers the human being as a bridge to overman:

Mankind is a rope fastened between animal and overman – a rope over an abyss. A dangerous crossing, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking back, a dangerous shuddering and standing still. What is great about human beings is that they are a bridge and not a purpose: what is lovable about human beings is that they are a crossing over and a going under.<sup>332</sup>

It is useful to read Nietzsche's statements carefully. Man is not referred to as the one on the rope; he is the rope itself, and he is stretched in the midst of danger and uncertainty. Man oscillates in a space between these two poles, and these two poles encompass his possibilities. By turning towards the overman, one can overcome one's historically alienated and distorted human identity towards life and enter into an active, creative process with the will to power. With nihilism, if there are no values that determine and limit human beings, everything is allowed, and for Nietzsche, this frightening situation also provides the opportunity to sail to distant open seas where

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<sup>330</sup> EH, *Why I Write Such a Good Book*, §1.

<sup>331</sup> Randall Havas, *The Overman*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, ed. by Ken Gemes and John Richardson (Oxford University Press, 2013), 463.

<sup>332</sup> Z, *Prologue*, §4.

infinite new discoveries will be made, new experiments, experiences, and truths will be revealed: “There are a thousand paths that have never yet been walked; a thousand healths and hidden islands of life. Human being and human earth are still unexhausted and undiscovered.”<sup>333</sup> However, that is not a guaranteed process; he can also undermine the possibility of his own becoming by going backward in a purely animal direction. This way back is probably not as arduous as the way forward, and for that reason alone, it has a temptation that can be easily chosen. But this does not mean a beneficial state of being for it either; rather, it can only find itself in the grip of utility and pleasure in the negation of life. Also, unlimited humanity in the absence of values can manifest itself as inhumanity. The effort to become overman must also make one wary of the inhuman because failed experiments can lead to inhuman undertakings such as Nazism, where no sacredness counts and can lead to the extermination of all forms of life. Then the target: “On the one hand, the defence of the human against the inhuman, on the other, the illustration of what surpasses the human in man.”<sup>334</sup>

To be on an abyss, in the midst of danger with no assurance to hold on to, is not only a situation that requires courage but also care and caution in every decision. In this sense, the overman is not a person who acts fearlessly with unrestrained freedom. In other words, the overman does not mean being a perfect and complete individual. One can tend to it only to the extent that one strives to overcome oneself and to the extent that one knows how to go under while overcoming oneself. Considering the overman as a goal does not imply a search for one's own self because there is no essence or self to be found; one tries to shape it and reveal it in one's actions. In this respect, one must despise and humiliate oneself as much as one conquers oneself in one's goal towards the overman. He will always find resistance in new perspectives and new selves to test in relation to the will to power. In the constant game of finding and losing oneself, the overman develops the horizon of his own possibilities and comes to have an existence that does not determine itself according to an external value. Neither causality nor logic nor transcendental principles serve his path; he acts by expecting the unexpected, by creating his own values and abandoning them when they do not serve his self-realization. The life of the overman is associated with many trials, dangers, and risks,

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<sup>333</sup> Z, *On the Bestowing Virtue*, §2.

<sup>334</sup> Dominique Janicaud, *On the Human Condition*, Translated by. Eileen Brennan (Routledge, 2005), 58.

but he never runs away from them in anticipation of a better life, or he does not seek goals that are easily attainable in pleasure. He is merely called to a life of unexplored danger and uncertain paths. It is precisely this kind of life that he enjoys. For him, necessary means desirable; he gladly accepts life's difficult moments, says yes to them, and faces illness and death without fear. The only way to affirm life is to live without a reactive attitude towards the ephemeral and transitory way of being in the world, knowing that the reality of death is a passion of the struggle for the powers of life and a time that one has to fulfill.

The positioning of the overman as an unattainable goal is another reversal and reassessment by Nietzsche. Nietzsche turns the relation between the purpose and the means upside down; since the overman is not an ontological position that applies to everyone, each person must take their own individual responsibility to overcome themselves in their own circumstances and to make themselves permanently active. Thus, although self-overcoming is a means to the overman, it, in fact, serves as the actualization of the aim in the present. However, the purpose of the characterized overman is not a spiritual or theoretical transformation, and one does not renounce one's animal-being when aiming for the overman. One also overcomes the dualisms that lead to the misrecognition of one's body and weaken oneself by negating life and becoming creative within the framework of forces and impulses that build one's own possibilities. As Schutte pointed out:

The overcoming of morality (and of the human condition) symbolizes the end of the dualism between body and spirit that has fragmented the lives of human beings. The overcoming of mind-body dualism is seen by Nietzsche as inducing a great overflow of creative power in human life. Creative power is life-affirming, in contrast to the life-denying cult of good versus evil in which the value of temporal life, the body, the passions, and the instincts is depreciated. In place of the dualism between body and spirit Nietzsche teaches that all life is a process of self-overcoming or will to power.<sup>335</sup>

Nietzsche's aim is both to affirm the devaluation of values and to affirm the negation of life itself brought about by nihilism, not simply to transform it into affirmation. In this sense, by accepting the fact that there are no objective truths with the devaluation of values, he wants to show that we no longer need and seek help from transcendent values. However, Nietzsche does not do this in order to renounce values but to create

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<sup>335</sup> Ofelia Schutte, *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche without Masks* (The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 118.

values in immanence by reversing the origins that shape values: “The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman shall be the meaning of the earth!”<sup>336</sup> In order to move towards the overman, a vague goal as the meaning of our life, he tells us to remain faithful to the earth; in other words, the seeking must be found only in immanence, no temptation beyond the world, and the body should be imagined. In this way, Nietzsche, by putting the body and its relation to forces at the center, tries to prepare a ground where emotions and affections are in no way controlled and restricted by moral judgments, where the hierarchy of drives is not neutralized by guilt under the yoke of cultural, social control, where they will always be at work as the unifier of new quests and discoveries.

Nietzsche conveys the process that calls human beings to the path of becoming overman through the metaphor of the three transformations of the spirit. The spirit transforms, respectively, first into a camel, then into a lion, and finally into a child. The camel is a person who assumes all the historical virtues, customs, and transcendental values, who takes it upon himself to fulfill all the commandments that are considered right, who feels indebted to the past, and who has adopted all the norms of sociality. “With respect to history, the camel represents the epoch of Egypt. According to Herodotus [...] the Egyptians are the most pious of men; they have the largest number of gods.”<sup>337</sup> For the camel, the only ground for self-realization is to obey “Thou shalt.” The camel regards only what it carries on its back as part of reality, and since it doesn't know how to say no, it has no choice but to endure everything it encounters with acquiescence, thus seeming to affirm life while, in fact, experiencing it in a negative and reactive way as a burden.<sup>338</sup>

When the camel carries its load to the most desolate part of the desert, it no longer wants to carry the desires and commands of others against the growth of the desert and wants to be its own master. In this respect, it tries to ensure its own freedom by saying ‘No’ to the burdens that hinder it and aggravate its existence, and turns into a lion. The lion expresses itself with “I will” instead of “thou shalt.” However, even when the lion

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<sup>336</sup> Z, *Prologue*, §3.

<sup>337</sup> Stanley Rosen, *The Mask of Enlightenment: Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (Yale University Press, 2004), 81.

<sup>338</sup> NP, 181.

says "I will" and puts his own self at the center (and it is worth remembering that for Nietzsche, the self is not in a credible place), he still acts from the ground of the old values and only tries to transform them into the product of his own will. Even if the lion rejects all the old values of history to which it is indebted, it is still not in a creative phase: "To create new values – not even the lion is capable of that: but to create freedom for itself for new creation – that is within the power of the lion. To create freedom for oneself and also a sacred No to duty: for that, my brothers, the lion is required."<sup>339</sup> The lion's place in world history is that "the lion refers first to particular periods like that of the Greek heroes and the Italian soldier-artists of the Renaissance; second, it refers to an imaginary time that exists only in Zarathustra's (or Nietzsche's) imagination."<sup>340</sup> To the extent that the lion is a resistance, it nevertheless exists in the desert of the past, positioned against the old values, in other words, in a dialectical way. The abandonment of values that begin with the lion's no paves the way for the creation of new values.

Then the lion turns into a child and sees life and the world with his own eyes for the first time in innocence, transcending the past and all ties, creating a distance difference that reaches out to the new. The child creates new values and can freely destroy them again; its greatest strength is in its forgetfulness and in not resenting the transience of things. The child lives directly in the flow of life as a part of it, without any opposition or dualism. Thus, the child neither knows morality and is therefore beyond good and evil, nor does it know opposites such as body-mind, being-being, and fact-value, and is therefore beyond the concept of truth. Time repeats infinitely in the child's image with the same vitality, always containing a difference, and the first-time experience of each difference gives birth to a genuine Yes to life. Since the child is far from transcendence, it is always in contact with life as a version of immanence, thus reflecting the character of the overman. These soul transformations do not entail a historical necessity, nor do they imply a stage through which every human being can pass. On the other hand, these three transformations can also be read as reflecting specific manifestations of nihilism: "The child's creative play makes possible the transvaluation of values: while the camel could only accept those values given to it

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<sup>339</sup> Z, *On the Three Metamorphoses*.

<sup>340</sup> Stanley Rosen, *op. cit.*, 82.

(passive nihilism), and the lion was capable only of devaluing those given values (reactive nihilism), the child is capable of a revaluation (active nihilism).”<sup>341</sup> Although the child's remaining dimension of active nihilism is in a position to produce new values that go beyond dualism, it needs the complementarity of the idea of eternal recurrence, which is another life-affirming part of Nietzsche's thought.

The overman is a type of person characterized by not harboring resentment against life, not acting according to values that devalue life, and aiming to affirm life. His aim is to try to justify life no matter what he encounters in becoming. This is not an optimistic approach or stoic attitude towards life, but instead of recognizing pain and negative experiences as a detriment to life, he takes them as a value of overcoming and testing oneself, thus adopting an attitude that can reflect one's own truths to life in the most competent way with one's own will. He reevaluates existing values in a way that destroys their position. Overman knows that life has no meaning in itself, but he creates new meanings; therefore, he does not believe in universal truths; he invents his own truths. He is not interested in the question of whether something is right or wrong or in a pragmatic search for whether something is beneficial or harmful. Basically, even if it contains negativity, pain, or lies, despite all its suffering, he asks the question of whether something enriches life or impoverishes it. He does not try to dominate the world of becoming and establish domination over life. He affirms life despite all its existing contradictions and determines his destiny by loving it. When he acts, he acts as if he will repeat the same action infinitely. In Nietzsche's words, "live in such a way that it is your duty to wish to live again."<sup>342</sup> He does not perform his actions to be a law for someone else but only in order to be a law for himself. In this sense, an overman is a person who embraces life with determination and courage, regardless of its difficulties, suffering, and chaos, and who creates truths on his or her own behalf solely through his or her own will to power in order to justify life. In this respect, for Nietzsche, the self-destruction of values revealed by nihilism constitutes an important opportunity to eliminate everything that alienates us from life and prevents us from being ourselves and affirming life. On the horizon of this possibility, human beings

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<sup>341</sup> Alan D. Schrift, *Nietzsche and Question of Interpretation*, 69.

<sup>342</sup> Nietzsche, *eKGWB/NF-1881,11 [163] – Nachgelassene Fragmente Frühjahr–Herbst 1881.*, [http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1881,11\[163\]](http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1881,11[163]).

can now acquire countless new untried ways of living, new unexplored perspectives, and practices that will enable them to be active in life in a healthy and strong way.

#### **4.2. Eternal Recurrence and Amor Fati**

The idea of eternal recurrence appears in Nietzsche's philosophy as the formula of the highest affirmation that completes the overman.<sup>343</sup> Nietzsche says that he brings together and reconciles the value of existence and becoming in the idea of eternal recurrence.<sup>344</sup> The transformation that the overman demands of us is more than just a change in our conceptual framework; it is a complete change in our way of life; on the other hand, the change is not only a projection towards the future, but it is also about assuming our own agency by freeing ourselves from the feelings of guilt, resentment, and regret that the past has caused in us. When it comes to the meaning of life, one of the most important issues for human beings is the meaning of their own mortality and the meaning of the existence of the finite, temporal, and transitory within this mortality. One's non-permanent and irreversible actions seem to be an argument against life, given the fact that one is powerless against time and one's own finitude. Surrounded by constant power struggles in life, human beings are confronted with pain, regret, and loss. With the revelation that life itself has no meaning after the death of God, the question for man is whether it is possible to give meaning to life within his finite life, and if so, how to measure its validity. Nietzsche introduces the concept of eternal recurrence as a principle by which we can test the meaning of life. Whether eternal recurrence is a psychological principle or a cosmological principle is debated among Nietzschean commentators.

When ascetic values offered human beings an afterlife in relation to the unchanging and permanent will to truth, this was, above all, a framework that transformed the understanding of the world in relation to temporality. In this sense, first, it is essential to reveal the perception of time and eternity in the history of Western thought in order to understand Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence. Ancient Greek thought conceived of time as having no beginning and no end, moving tragically between chaos and order in constant repetition so that the transformations of time were understood in

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<sup>343</sup> EH, *Thus spake Zarathustra*, §1.

<sup>344</sup> WP §1058.

a cyclical sense. In the cyclical character of time, events take place in specific forms, and in this respect, they have no specific meaning apart from their form. With the emergence of Christianity on the stage of history, within the framework of the idea that the universe was created out of nothing, this cyclical perception of time is broken and takes on a linear character on the basis of a beginning and an end. “The Christian account of time amounts to the invention of “history” in the sense of a global conception of the singular importance of events in the world scripted by the irreversible and nonrepeatable course of time directed toward salvation.”<sup>345</sup> Through the invention of history, time flows to its end, never to return and never to repeat itself in any way. With the Christian idea of an afterlife, the story of each individual life has a unique meaning and value; every action is recorded on a transcendent plane and becomes decisive for human beings even after their lifetime. The mechanistic natural science, which modern philosophy laid the groundwork for, treated the idea of time quantitatively and explained it in a deterministic manner only in the context of cause and effect, thereby excluding the teleological explanations that pursued a specific purpose in the classical conception. The transformation in the conception of time reaches a radical stage in Kantian thought. When Kant positions time and space as the a priori intuition of the human being rather than a quality of things, time becomes an element of the subject's perception. However, with Hegel, the excluded teleological understanding of time reappears as the dialectical unfolding of Geist on earth and brings with it a progressive understanding of history.

Whether cyclical, apocalyptic religious, or progressive secular understandings of history, they all have a perspective that negates life and renders the present meaningless for the sake of an ideal future. They always devalue the present life by comparing it to a better life beyond. The aim of Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence is to give the present and the finite back their rightful place and meaning, which has been missed and trivialized against such universal teleological inferences that see the end as salvation. In relation to the project of naturalization, Nietzsche puts time in its natural place in the will to power. The existence of the present can be evaluated neither in terms of the future nor in terms of the character of the past; moreover, one cannot leap out of the flow of becoming, just as one cannot leap out of

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<sup>345</sup> Lawrence Hatab, *Nietzsche's Life Sentences*, 59.

one's shadow, in this respect, becoming has a self-justifying necessity. One may ask why Nietzsche, despite his rejection of all transcendental metaphysical terms such as God, essence, purpose, unity, etc., takes a concept such as eternity as his starting point. For Nietzsche, eternity appears not as a metaphysical term but as a state that can be experienced transcendently within immanence. Just as in the doctrine of the overman, he does not appeal to transcendent values but transcends the agency of creation. The meaning of the eternal is that it is the return of the Same, and "eternity, the eternal return of the Same, meant "there is no end." To say that there is no end is not the same as to say that the world is endless."<sup>346</sup> As we have already seen in the section on the will to power, since life is a state of forces in an endless struggle with a limited amount of power, it does not in any way aim for an end; if it did, it would have already been reached. On the other hand, the sameness expressed in the return of the same is not some kind of recurring metaphysical idea of identity. Eternal cannot mean "perfect, unchanging presence," and 'to recur' means 'to happen again,' and the word 'again' itself implies change and return to a condition which has undergone temporal alteration."<sup>347</sup> In this sense, although recurrence always manifests itself as the same, the consciousness about it has the capacity to change its return.

Nietzsche presents the idea of eternal recurrence as the most dangerous mystery. This is because, on the one hand, recurrence offers the possibility of perpetuating the affirmation of existence and overcoming resentment; on the other hand, the catastrophe of eternal recurrence threatens to turn one's life into an endless torment because there is no way out of the misery of life, a nihilistic life repeats itself over and over again, and any hope that the future might bring for overcoming the past is blocked. In this sense, the idea of eternal recurrence tests whether the human being has reached a perspective that can affirm and justify life through a correct relationship with the will to power. Nietzsche is aware that overcoming nihilism cannot be simply a matter of abandoning the past and transcendental values; if an affirmation is to be made, it must involve not only the present and the future but also the past itself; in this sense, it is not a question of breaking with the past, but of making it one's own, taking responsibility for it and making health out of its illness.

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<sup>346</sup> Joan Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return* (The John Hopkins University Press, 1972), 3.

<sup>347</sup> Harold Alderman, *Nietzsche's Gift* (Ohio University Press, 1979), 90

Among Nietzsche's published texts, the idea of the eternal recurrence first appears in *Gay science* before *Zarathustra*:

The total character of the world, by contrast, is for all eternity chaos, not in the sense of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, organization, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic anthropomorphisms are called. [...] The whole musical mechanism repeats eternally its tune, which must never be called a melody.[...] Let us beware of thinking that the world eternally creates new things.<sup>348</sup>

It is important that Nietzsche mentions eternal chaos because eternal recurrence in no way imposes a certain model of order on the world. However, as we know from the *will to power*, the amount of power in the world is limited; in this sense, there is no creation of something new in the sense of something beyond itself. Nietzsche describes the idea of eternal recurrence as a thought experiment:

The heaviest weight. What if some day or night a demon were to steal into your loneliest loneliness and say to you : 'This life as you now live it and have lived it you will have to live once again and innumerable times again; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unspeakably small or great in your life must return to you, all in the same succession and sequence -even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned over again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!' Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: 'You are a god, and never have I heard anything more divine.' If this thought gained power over you, as you are it would transform and possibly crush you; the question in each and every thing, 'Do you want this again and innumerable times again?' would lie on your actions as the heaviest weight! Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to long for nothing more fervently than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?<sup>349</sup>

The concept of eternal recurrence appears as a challenge to becoming, to its transience, to who can endure the lack of meaning in life itself and who can afford to create new values by affirming life. In this sense, it is seen as a psycho-ethical test for choosing people's actions. Nietzsche's aim is to create a space in which we can take responsibility for becoming and building our own authenticity by assuming our own agency on the path of the overman. In the sameness brought about by the idea of eternal recurrence, life is positioned in a perspective that is constantly affirmed and desired for human beings at every moment; thus in the absolute necessity of each moment itself, it shows how we can connect past, present and future in a way that develops our possibilities: "The teaching of eternal recurrence teaches us to embrace our finitude; it

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<sup>348</sup> GS §109.

<sup>349</sup> GS §341.

shows how the traditional antithesis of time and eternity can be overcome and how we can come to dwell in both the real moment and the real eternal.”<sup>350</sup> For Nietzsche, the principle of eternal recurrence performs a selective function in the sense that it selects between those who accept life as it is solely on the basis of the possibilities of their will to power and those who deny it under the oppression of the conditions of life.<sup>351</sup> However, this does not mean that selection will eliminate them as a species; on the contrary, eternal recurrence forces human beings, who are degenerate and pessimistic, filled with resentment and revenge, to undergo a major transformation in their anxiety to live this life an infinite number of times again. On the other hand, eternal recurrence is not an antidote to the pains, deficiencies, and disappointments experienced in life:

The abysmal thought resolves no conflict, cures no sickness, joins no fragments that do not fit together. [...] It does not supply the reader with tools to remove suffering, anxiety, or nausea from his or her life or even to make a life full of suffering, anxiety, and nausea bearable. Life—and this is the story’s message—is unbearable. There is a thorn in life’s side that cannot be removed; without it, the anxiety that we call life would not be possible since it is because of this thorn that life goes on. This thorn is eternity.<sup>352</sup>

Nietzsche knows to affirm life not by eliminating suffering but by using it as a possibility to enhance oneself and develop one's possibilities with each new resistance; suffering is the master of becoming creative in life, and in this respect, Zarathustra presents himself as the advocate of suffering: “Zarathustra, the advocate of life, the advocate of suffering, the advocate of the circle – you I summon, my most abysmal thought!”<sup>353</sup>

On the other hand, in terms of human affirmation of life, the past, to which every moment experienced in the linearly perceived structure of time irreversibly flows away and falls into the soil of history that is about to disappear, to which human beings have access only through memory, but which their will cannot influence, change, or power in any way, stands as a great obstacle. Zarathustra, in a speech to cripples in the chapter on redemption, argues that the will is under the bondage of the past. Will “is an angry spectator of everything past. The will cannot will backward; that it cannot break time and time’s greed – that is the will’s loneliest misery.”<sup>354</sup> The past here means not only

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<sup>350</sup> Harold Alderman, *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> WP, §1053, 1056, 1058.

<sup>352</sup> Krzysztof Michalski, *The Flame of Eternity*, 185.

<sup>353</sup> Z, *Convalescent*, §1.

<sup>354</sup> Z, *On Redemption*.

lived experiences but also the impermanence of life, its irrevocable loss, the eventual disappearance of everything, and its lack of any permanence. Although for the will, the fact that everything it does ultimately becomes a "was" independent of itself, over which it no longer has any influence and cannot intervene, is a situation that suspends its agency and power of control, at the same time the will does not feel free from the past, it is captive to it. The past is a stone that the will cannot move, so it feels resentment and revenge against it; furthermore, because the will suffers from its powerlessness in the face of the past, it thinks that the will itself and life itself should be seen as a kind of punishment.<sup>355</sup> Nietzsche thus grasps the reactive and resentful apprehension of the will in life temporally before all psychological and physiological demands; in this respect, the affirmation of life and the will's emancipation from the past are moved to a central dimension. Against the will, which perceives existence as a punishment for the transience of time and everything as futile, Nietzsche proposes to transform all "'was' into 'I willed it so,'" which is the creative power of the will, and to take responsibility for one's actions by assuming the agency of life and time.<sup>356</sup> But there is still a strange contradiction in the sentence "I willed"; in order to affirm life, one attributes the whole of one's past to the creative attitude of the will by which one manifests and manages oneself, but what one wills to recur eternally, that is, one's past, contains life-negating tendencies. In this sense, what one encounters in eternal recurrence is the affirmation of even one's negation, seeing it as a form of will to power, affirming one's past reactivity with the active force of the present. Any other solution will involve shame, ignoring, self-blame, and regret for the past.

Nietzsche expresses this tragic affirmation of the past in the concept of Amor Fati in terms of saying Yes to one's own destiny and being oneself: "My formula for human greatness is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be different, not in the future, not in the past, not for all eternity. Not only to endure what is necessary, still less to conceal it — all idealism is falseness in the face of necessity — but to love it."<sup>357</sup> To love one's destiny means not to judge in any way the self-realization of one's own will, not to evaluate it on a moral dimension according to a criterion beyond oneself. Loving one's fate is in no way consenting to it, tolerating it, or bearing it as the camel did. It is seeing

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> EH, *Why I Am So Clever*, §10.

all moments together, without compressing one's life between future and past, regret and hope, and knowing that in all of them, one participates in life neither reducible to circumstances nor independent of them, but only through the movement of one's own being and will. In this sense, amor fati exists as a complement to the idea of eternal recurrence and enables the overman to complete his spiritual transformations and to create with the innocence of a child without seeing the past as a burden.

What eternal recurrence is trying to teach us is that we should do our actions in such a way that we both desire to do them, in the same way, every time and also take full responsibility for them, saying that I did it, it was shaped by my power and desire. In this way, we can infinitely affirm life in all its fullness in the face of our own being-towards-death: 'Was that – life?' I want to say to death. 'Well then! One More Time!' My friends, what do you think? Do you not want to say to death, as I do: Was that – life? For Zarathustra's sake, well then! One More Time!'<sup>358</sup>

#### **4.3. Convalescence: New Philosophy and Revaluation of Values**

The idea of eternal recurrence, in relation to the ethics of power, is both the preparer of the person who will undertake the re-evaluation of life and the measure on which values should be based. In the invalidity of eternal and eternal truths and values revealed by the death of God, if a goal is to be set for human beings, it will only be achieved by acting from one's own will to power, by recognizing no transcendent reference, by being faithful to one's own becoming, by being true to one's own becoming, and by assuming the responsibility of being in becoming. However, this in no way means creating universal or objective values; there are no such values; life itself is meaningless, and meaning must be created by each human individual for himself or herself and gifted to life. Nietzsche argues that the philosophers of the future will never yearn for universal truths, and even when they see their own truths shared with others, it will hurt their pride, and they will see it as a worthless truth: "My judgment is my judgment: other people don't have an obvious right to it too" – perhaps this is what such a philosopher of the future will say.<sup>359</sup> For those who will re-evaluate values, the truth will not be so high in front of life that it is sacrificed for the sake of

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<sup>358</sup> Z, *The Sleepwalker Song*, §1.

<sup>359</sup> BGE §43.

life but will be valued to the extent that it serves to make sense of and enrich life. Future philosophers are, therefore, always driven by a pathos of distance; they never believe in equality; they see life through the window of difference. The new philosophers of the nihilist age will have no illusions about their bodies, will correctly interpret the hierarchy of drives, will reject any transcendental notion of reason, essence, soul, etc., which is set against life, and will always take into account the historicity of processes, knowing that something is always in movement towards becoming.

Means of enduring it: the revaluation of all values. No longer joy in certainty but in uncertainty; no longer "cause and effect" but the continually creative; no longer will to preservation but to power; no longer the humble expression, "everything is merely subjective," but "it is also our work!- Let us be proud of it!"<sup>360</sup>

In the face of transcendent values being an illusion, there is no safe harbor for humanity, and humanity is doomed to drift in an endless ocean. However, Nietzsche wants to use this situation for new discoveries and new adventures, for there are no fixed and unchanging signs anymore, as in the sea, life is constantly being interpreted, and one must be ready to risk dangerous predictions, storms, and even sinkings in order to find one's direction. By opening the door to other possibilities of existence in life, one can act from many perspectives and turn life into an experiment for oneself. To overcome the disease of nihilism and regain health, one must be the creator of new values and simultaneously know how to break them down. For Nietzsche, destruction and making are creative insofar as they are qualities of power.

For Nietzsche, convalescence is approached through an agonistic relationship between illness and health. When one is in illness, one discovers great health in life, which one experiences as negation under the influence of reactive forces, and great health emphasizes the inevitable necessity of illness for life. The transitions between these perspectives are crucial for the affirmation of life. Life cannot be evaluated as a whole, but it can be affirmed. However, there is by no means one universal health that applies to every person, so health is something that one has to discover for oneself. Each person's health experience is unique and individual: "That which one individual needs for his health is to another a cause of sickness, and many ways and means to freedom

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<sup>360</sup> WP §1059.

of spirit may to more highly developed natures count as ways and means to unfreedom.”<sup>361</sup> For human beings, there are as many and varied and different kinds of health as there are diseases. One discovers even the character of one's health only to the extent that illness brings it to us. Until one becomes ill, one knows nothing to activate the instincts of defense and healing. Health is not a static state that can be possessed or not possessed permanently; on the contrary, it is a dynamic state, a form of struggle and the conquest of disease. But the two do not stand side by side, one as the limit of the other. There is no difference in nature between health and disease, only in degree. Getting sick takes as much skill as it does to get healthy; what makes a person sick reveals the limit of his strengths and weaknesses. The future philosophers aspire to sufferings and illnesses that are worthy only of them.

Nevertheless, are there no experiments for new horizons and no decisive measure for health? In other words, how can one check whether one's practices of overcoming oneself embrace values that negate life? Nietzsche uses the metaphor of the hammer for that. A value that cannot withstand a hammer ceases to be a value, and the hammer, as Nietzsche has said many times, is eternal recurrence. The hammer is a tool of destruction in that it is brutal and ruthless but also a tool of shaping and transformation. The hammer can be creative enough to make an image out of stone: “I am always driven anew to human beings by my ardent will to create; thus, the hammer is driven toward the stone.”<sup>362</sup> It could be a sign of destruction: “The hardness of the hammer, the joy even in destruction, are in a decisive way part of the preliminary conditions for a Dionysian task.”<sup>363</sup> Nietzsche also uses the hammer to measure the sound emanating from idols erected in the name of values by hitting them to understand whether they are full or empty, valuable or worthless: “Here for once to ask questions with a hammer and, perhaps, to hear in response that famous hollow sound which speaks of swollen innards.”<sup>364</sup> In this sense, the hammer is also a tool for re-evaluating values: “A revaluation of values whose new pressure and hammer will steel a conscience and transform a heart into bronze to bear the weight of a responsibility like this”<sup>365</sup> and “True philosophers reach for the future with a creative hand and everything that is and

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<sup>361</sup> HAH, I, V, §286.

<sup>362</sup> Z, *On the Blessed Isles*.

<sup>363</sup> EH, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* §8.

<sup>364</sup> TI, *Foreword*.

<sup>365</sup> BGE §203.

was becomes a means, a tool, a hammer for them. Their “knowing” is creating, their creating is a legislating, their will to truth is – will to power. –<sup>366</sup> Against the dangers of the unlimited possibilities of human experimentation and creativity, the hammer allows us to probe against all kinds of fictional values that would lead to the inhuman practices of modernity. Eternal recurrence is the threshold that one cannot jump over in terms of self-realization, as one is the fate that one cannot escape. Moreover, in order to come to terms with the motives, emotions, and judgments that history and tradition have accumulated and transmitted over hundreds of years, it is necessary to confront them with the hardness of a hammer and, at the same time, to discover the mines buried thousands of meters beneath these deposits. The evaluation of values can only be possible by moving through history itself, that is, by transcending the past itself: “A revaluation of values is achieved only when there is a tension of new needs, of men with new needs, who suffer from the old values without attaining this consciousness.”<sup>367</sup> However, this is not a dialectical movement; it is neither inevitable nor assured; it can even lead to disasters, but it still depends on the will of man himself. Consequently, out of nihilism, a disease that infects the history of Western cultural thought, Nietzsche creates an opportunity to re-evaluate values and to give human life countless horizons and perspectives, moreover, to affirm and justify life itself.

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<sup>366</sup> BGE §211.

<sup>367</sup> WP §1008.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Nietzsche's philosophy has positioned itself as a dynamite that will split history in two and prepare the ground for humanity to make a leap again at a critical period when the transcendental values that negate and alienate life have historically expired, and their own self-destruction has taken place. The philosopher, who articulates the testimony of his age around the phrase "God is dead," on the one hand, seeks to expose and discredit the philosophical, cultural, and scientific forms of moral judgments that permeate all forms of thinking and try to maintain their existence in a hidden way, and on the other hand, he calls for a thinking in which human beings can overcome nihilistic values. Although Nietzsche's philosophy is a radical critique of Western thought, it is still assumed by thinkers like Heidegger to remain within the tradition of Western metaphysics and to continue a kind of nihilism. However, this is a misconception; Nietzsche was aware of what his own destiny demanded; it was his fate to put on the mask of the powers of metaphysics that he sought to seize and destroy in order to make a breakthrough for the future and to clear the way for the affirmation of life so that the traditional existence of human beings would be overcome and man would be reintroduced as the meaning of life. As soon as Nietzsche unshackled nihilism with his project of re-evaluating values, humanity found the problem of justifying and making sense of its existence in the face of the meaninglessness of life an impossible task. Nietzsche's whole effort was to open the path blocked by the values of tradition that devalue life and to make thought preparatory to a life that one can experience only from one's own will, as oneself. Since the issue of value is an essential feature of the history of Western thought in its historical trajectory, Nietzsche radicalized it and tried to bring out man's health from within his illness. On the other hand, Nietzsche's re-evaluation of values and his placing immanence in opposition to transcendence is not a displacement within metaphysics, a kind of reversal. He transforms all the reception of values by eliminating the grounds on which they are placed. In other words, the change Nietzsche expects of us is not just a change of approach in thought; he calls for a change that will transform our entire way of life and enable us to rediscover the possibilities of being human; otherwise, the threat of

nihilism looming at our doorstep will continue to leave us in the middle of a vast desert. Thus, Nietzsche eliminates the moral consideration of human existence and the necessity of a moral reason accompanying one's actions. The fact that nihilism emerges as a necessary consequence of the logic of values, as well as being a situation that human beings will constantly encounter in their relationship with existence, points to the obligation of human beings' constantly recurring activity of overcoming themselves and affirming life based on life itself for Nietzsche. But this is by no means guaranteed to happen because it is not dialectical in any way, and the loss of the absoluteness of values and their power to limit human beings leaves them open to the greatest dangers. After Nietzsche, humanity experienced these dangers in the form of mass killings, horrific experiments on human beings and perception management, environmental destruction under the dominance of technology, and the resort to all means of inhumanity while aiming to overcome human beings. Nietzsche's madman was perhaps premature in declaring that God is dead and that we must now become God because humanity soon found itself first filling God's throne and then positioning money as the supreme value. Now more than ever, life, with its inherent transcendence, is treated as incomplete, worthless, and a mistake to be corrected. The purification from God and all sacredness ironically did not correspond to a phase in which even passive nihilism was overcome but only reversed it; furthermore, today, as a version of Platonism, if transcendental values cannot be realized in the world, there are competing attempts to reconstruct the world in such a way that it is transformed to conform to transcendental values. Science remains one of God's shadows, devoted to radically transforming human nature by encompassing existence with claims to objective and universal truths despite having no power to construct values. In this sense, nihilism in all its facets - active, passive, radical, incomplete - manifests and exhibits itself simultaneously in our age. Nietzsche's call on the path to the overman is still valid, and man is waiting to get out of these shadows, overcome himself, and reckon with values. The emphasis on individuality, which is at the forefront of every layer of Nietzsche, is by no means a temptation of liberal thought. As Nietzsche does not believe in any universal concept, he does not believe in the concept of humanity. Although Nietzsche appeals to human beings as a herd and calls for them to overcome themselves, this does not aim at a mass transformation. In this respect, it is futile to expect political salvation from Nietzsche and to try to find a source of consoling values for our age. The central issue for Nietzsche is to show that man's existence as a moral

being cripples him, dulls his instincts, alienates him from life and himself, and against these, to prepare a ground where man can reveal his own possibilities to overcome them.

Nihilism is the name of both a destiny and a human relationship with life. In other words, on the one hand, nihilism is the result of the logic of the production of the values of the Western tradition of thought historically, and on the other hand, it is a form of existential relationship that human beings have established with life. Historically, while nihilism was found hidden in the transcendental values that devalued life in the beginning, with the death of God, the groundlessness of objective, holistic truth claims, and the devaluation of the values that would make life meaningful, it has become a fate that must inevitably be confronted. On the other hand, nihilism is related to the inability to accept and affirm life itself as it is in terms of the way one evaluates the conditions of one's own existence. Therefore, nihilism appears as a human condition that can exist in every age.

In this regard, Nietzsche's analysis of nihilism consists of a multi-layered and multi-faceted structure. To examine how this way of relating to life is constructed, I have discussed how Nietzsche, through his work on genealogy, examines the evaluation processes of values. Through genealogy, Nietzsche pursued a strategy of destabilizing values considered absolute and transcendent by showing their historical contingency and degenerate origins in preparation for a re-evaluation of values. In addition, Nietzsche considers the process of evaluating values in terms of the person who creates them. In this respect, I have discussed Nietzsche's views on psychology and physiology in relation to the naturalization project to analyze the person who creates values that negate and devalue life. Then, I dealt with Nietzsche's concept of the will to power, which is a more fundamental element determining the psychological and physiological layer, together with his interpretation of perspectivism, and tried to reveal in terms of which forces the nihilist evaluates life.

In this sense, human beings' inability to realize themselves as themselves due to the feeling of powerlessness they experience in the face of endless struggles, infinite flow, and change in life causes their drives and wills to turn against themselves and life with the resentment brought about by reactivity. However, from the point of view of the

will to power, the nihilist's reactivity constitutes the character of his existence. The nihilist's reactivity in life is not merely the result of accidental failures or powerlessness; otherwise, he could not remain reactive in other encounters in which he could competently assert his power. Therefore, reactive forces do not react against an effect; they only exert power in the form of depriving every force in life of action, preventing them from being effective. In other words, the nihilist's reactivity is his effective will to power, and the nihilist uses his power over others by creating transcendent values through the resentment that emerges through reactionary forces. Thereby, his will to power, namely his way of being, is, in fact, the will to nothingness as nihilism. However, the values created by the nihilist's will to power have dissolved, and he is left without a framework to make sense of and justify his own life. With the death of God, nihilism began to manifest itself in different ways; therefore, with the destruction of values that deny and devalue life, human denial of life has not ended. On the one hand, this destruction has led to a situation in which man is now skeptical of all values that would give life a purpose and integrity, and he stops himself from willing anything. This refers to passive nihilism and is most common in Buddhism as a form of withdrawal from life. On the other hand, it is to bring the world itself to destruction as revenge for the failure to realize transcendent values in the world, which is the way to realize the will to power. This is reflected in modern ideological movements that seek to prevent human negation of life by destroying all existing values under the leadership of science and reason and in radical doctrines that seek to challenge the world in the name of the realization of transcendent teachings. However, both of them remained in nihilism because they failed to affirm life as it is and because they needed transcendent values. In other words, while one is caught in the nihilism of despair by desiring and failing to attain values that have no world, the other is caught in the nihilism of disorientation because he does not have a guide to make sense of life in the absence of transcendent values. The most striking dimension of nihilism manifests itself in the last man. The last man is the one who seeks no meaning in life and believes in no value, and in this respect, he indicates the final stage of nihilism. In the absence of transcendent values after the death of God, the last man appears as a person who entertains and amuses himself with his own meaninglessness. All he cares about is his own health and happiness; he doesn't want to be himself, and he doesn't create anything. Nietzsche sees the last man as the most dangerous kind of human being. For the nihilist, the problem is the absence of objective absolute values; for

Nietzsche, there are no such values, and in the shadow of these values, man is alienated only from himself and life. What is important for Nietzsche is that human beings continue to live as themselves and create values for themselves based on the fact that life in itself has no meaning. The death of God is also the death of man because all traditions and institutions, all values and moral principles, all methods, and concepts of knowing that man has established throughout history have been shaped by the concept of absolute transcendent truth. In this sense, Nietzsche reports a human type that transcends the human determined within the framework of these values: the overman. Overman is a person who does not seek universal and transcendent values to encompass life but creates values to increase his/her own power and to be himself/herself, and who gives meaning to life that does not find meaning in life. In this sense, the overman is one who goes beyond good and evil and creates virtues and principles that can only be laws for himself. With the idea of eternal recurrence, the overman takes responsibility not only for the present and the future but also for the past, where the will is imprisoned and cannot intervene, and becomes capable of being an agent in his life. With eternal recurrence, the human being knows that all his choices and actions will be repeated over and over again in the same way and that he can never escape necessity, so the question is how much he can endure being himself and how much he can take responsibility for what he has experienced. In conclusion, for Nietzsche, nihilism is a threat that devalues and renders meaningless life itself, but at the same time, by undermining all the dominating authorities, it offers us an opportunity to make sense of and legitimize life without ascetic values and an openness to encounter life in the right way.

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