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THE ORDER OF THE REAL: NIETZSCHE AND LACAN

Babette Babich

The gods belong to the field of the real.
—Lacan, "Of the Network of Signifiers"¹

Lacan's understanding of the Imaginary and Symbolic delineates the kind of relationships that human beings can have to the natural and social world, but the Real emblemizes the failure of representation as such:

The real has to be sought beyond the dream—in what the dream has enveloped, hidden from us, behind the lack of representation of which there is only one representative. This is the real that governs our activities more than any other and it is psychoanalysis that designates it for us. (*XI*, 45)

The Real as such a failure or lack of representation especially characterizes what Slavoj Žižek calls Lacan's third period punctuation of "the connection between the death drive and the symbolic order," where, in Žižek's expression, "the main accent of Lacan's teaching is put on the Real as impossible."² Given the tripartite Cæsarian (historically Gallic) and trinitarian resonance inevitable in Western culture and irresistible for any Lacanian, Borromean knot-struck analyst, this third period represents Lacan's ultimate take on the Real. Žižek's reading of the primacy of the Real in Lacan's later period has inspired

some of the recent attention paid to Lacan, especially in Feminist/Gender/Queer theory.³ The recognition of distinct phases in Lacan's thinking is not especially new or inventive. But where earlier readings of Lacan's development note the evolutionary differentiation and ultimate importance of the Real, they underline its relative ambiguity. For Žižek, the Real at the heart of the symbolic order is intrinsically paradoxical, and this ambiguity points to the very power of the notion of the Real "conceived as a hard kernel resisting symbolization, dialectization, persisting in its place, always returning to it" (*SOI*, 160).

Unavoidable in its locus at the heart of language, sense, and reason, the Real, to use Lacan's own words retrieving Freud's account of real experience "in the field of science [is] situated as that which the subject is condemned to miss, but even this miss will be revelatory" (*XI*, 39). The impact of a missed encounter describes the disappointment that is the fundamental characteristic of the Real. Affected by a missed encounter in reverse, in retroversion, in the life-cadence of disappointment: the Lacanian Real is what one stumbles against. This misadventure is exactly because of the position of the Real as an impossible kernel at the heart of symbolic reality.

Stumbling against and missing the Real is retroductively "revelatory" because, as Žižek expresses Ernesto Laclau/Chantal Mouffe's concept of *antagonism*, "the logic of the Real in its relevance for the socio-ideological field [is] . . . a certain limit which is itself nothing; it is only to be construed retroactively, from a series of effects as the traumatic point which escapes them" (*SOI*, 163). This retroductive effect is what Nietzsche finds as the same illicit process at work in all science. Nietzsche's understanding of physical, scientific nature is born of this same retroduction. And the inevitability of this illusion may be imagined by saying that this is the way desire (and even more strikingly: the way love) works. For this reason, Philippe Julien could conclude his account of the Real issue of psychoanalytic practice quoting, and so taking Lacan at his word on it, that when a woman "encounters a man who speaks to her in accordance with her own fundamental fantasy, she will draw an effect of love from it sometimes, [an effect] of desire always."⁴

Akin to the vagaries of desire, like the implausible lateness and always-already-thereness of love, the nature of Lacan's Real is protean. The notion is impossible in more than one or perhaps in every sense.

François Roustang, in a negative assault against Lacan, builds upon an exactly unsympathetic interpretation of the variable expressions of the Real in Lacan's sense. Thus, Roustang writes, accurately and with the demythologizing excess marking the catabolized convert, "To my knowledge and contrary to what can be said for the Imaginary and the Symbolic, there is no text in which the Real as such is developed. The word appears here and there as if its meaning were obvious."⁵ In this not clinically but casually resistant way, Roustang takes "The Impossibility of the Real" as the very symbolic expression of imprecision and express obscurantism. Roustang continues his complaint for some forty pages, finally concluding: "In sum, it will be extremely difficult to give the notion of the Real any consistency at all" and "in the end, it could be said that the Real simply does not exist" (*LD*, 101).

At the very least, the contrast between Roustang and Žižek means that commentary on the Real is uneven, in fact characterized by the kind of gap one might imagine, if the leeway of a metaphor be permitted, as belonging in essence to its impossible nature. Thus, there are readings that find that the tension within the topic of the Real produces the kind of intellectual torque that brings Lacan exactly into the domain, though hardly within the dominion, of philosophy.⁶ What connection is to be found or forged between psychoanalysis proper and philosophical propriety, an attitudinal discourse characterized and ridiculed by Lacan as pretending to the (illusory) discourse of the master?

As thinker, as spiritual aeronaut, whose work manages to install what are, as Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen has it, patently philosophical constellations, Lacan is ranged philosophically against philosophy.⁷ Hence, a recent book collection is drawn from a colloquium including coordinate readings of Lacan with Kant, Plato, Heidegger, and featuring a direct reading by Derrida, and there are other examples one might give arguing Lacan's philosophical alignment.⁸ But some care is needed here, if only because both establishments, philosophical as well as Lacanian, are likely to take exception. Thus, where Žižek titles Lacan a "transcendental philosopher," he does so only in the pro- and proto- or strictly Lacanian sense of Lacan's express "antiphilosophy"—"*Je m'insurge contre la philosophie.*" I will suggest that to be thus philosophically ranged against philosophy parallels the range and philosophic project of another thinker, Friedrich Nietzsche.

Like Lacan in Borch-Jacobsen's formulation, Nietzsche was an "autodidact" in the field of philosophy. And, like Lacan, he was no academic outsider but attained the striking early success in his own waters that marked him out if not for greatness, at least for a professorial appointment at the age of twenty-four. By training a classical philologist, Nietzsche's eye for detail and contradiction, but also for the broader consequences of the same array of contradictory details, brought him to the border of philosophy. Like Lacan, he crossed the boundary without renouncing his philological vocation (or first desire). And if Nietzsche's interpretation of philology found little support among his contemporaries, it can be minimally asserted that today he must not only be recognized but also reckoned with as philosopher.

Nevertheless, the received Lacanian view, perhaps following the received Heideggerian view, regards Nietzsche as antipode. Even Žižek, otherwise so sensitive to impossible possibility in reading Lacan, finds it hard to disentangle Nietzsche from Habermas's post-structuralist linkage, because that linkage declaratively lumps Lacan in with "post-structuralism" and fails to address him directly.¹⁰ As Žižek notes rightly enough, "Lacan's work makes almost no references to Nietzsche."¹¹ All this is right, and for largely aesthetic reasons, insofar as Lacan fits more with Hegel (and Kojève and Koyré) than with Nietzsche, it is understandable why a philosophic reflection on Lacan's category of the Real would not begin with Nietzsche. Yet it is the register of the Real that, more than any other in Lacan's conceptual panoply, can be better conceived via Nietzsche—if only because, however the metonymic assonance with Hegel, the alternative will be reason, however spiritualized. In what follows, then, I do not offer a reading of Nietzsche *with* Lacan but a conceptual comparison of Nietzsche's Chaos/Nature and Lacan's Real. It remains to be seen whether the substitution of conjunction for preposition sufficiently highlights the distinction between Lacan and Nietzsche to afford a philosophic designation of "the real that governs our activities."

Nietzsche and Lacan's Real

We recall that Nietzsche's understanding of nature, as the raw face of existence structuring human life, depicts nature as compelling a social

reworking of that chaotic face in ways suitable for human organization and purposes. For Nietzsche, this re-envisioning of nature answers the compulsion of human neediness. Yet the source of that significance in subjectivity—including its intersubjective and unconscious dimensions—is forgotten and taken instead to be an objective reality embodied in the mathematized image of scientific nature. In this way, the illusion of culture presents itself as the sole arbiter of truth. Thus, what Lacan calls the Imaginary is projected for Nietzsche via the Symbolic in an adumbration of the Real eliding any real encounter.

Lacan's Real is not the basic reality of science or the "real" world as distinguished from the scholarly or theoretical world. For Lacan, in the enigmatic formulation already cited, the Real is what we miss: it is the encounter with chance, the ineluctable luck of the world-child's game played with itself; it is uncountenanceable, the inconceivable wonder that things are as they are and not some other way. This contrary-to-fact, Leibnizian conditional is an impossible conception in itself but mediated in its possibility by the Imaginary and the Symbolic negation.

The Real, the impossible being of things, the *that things are*, is not what is commonly understood by the words *real* or *really* or *realistic*, except inasmuch as these terms share the connotation of insurpassability. The Real is what we come up against, the obstacle we stumble over—and miss. In an ultimate delineation, the Real beyond image and symbol is finitude. That is, in a first and approximate Lacanian formulation, the Real is the impossibility of temporality to be thought in this definition of infinite finitude.

For Lacan, the impossible order of the Real does not permit a simple mirroring or coordination of the "inner" and the "outer" world of the uncertain (knowing or unknowing) subject of analysis, because the elusive subject too is ordered in the Real not by means of a plentitude more properly conspicuous as a feature of the Imaginary, but rather by way of an original insufficiency, a "little reality."¹² For Lacan, this insufficiency proves a species of subjective swerve or *clinamen*, "a certain dehiscence at the heart of the organism," which transforms the analytic subject's relationship to both nature and the body. Rather than the "cure" of ego-psychology, in the ethical domain, the *Cura*, care or concern of analysis for Lacan seeks to sustain the heart of this insufficiency as desire. Leaving out the stage of the Imaginary and

considering the symbolic function of analysis, we may observe that for Lacan, it will be this transformed relationship which intimates the truth "inscribed at the very heart of the analytic practice, since this practice is constantly remaking the discovery of the power of the truth in ourselves, in our very flesh" (*E*, 118). In the symbolic domain, animal understanding becomes human knowledge. (*E*, 4).

Lacan claims in substance that the core orientation of psychoanalysis is the Real as such. As Lacan appries the reader, the unconscious, the heart of experience, "is not what one imagines it to be—the unconscious . . . is real."¹³ But to say this is not merely to say that the unconscious exists in fact. Indeed, if this is represented as the core discovery of psychoanalysis, the demonstration of the existence of the unconscious, for any rigorous reader of Freud and of the history of the unconscious, including Lacan, must seem a paltry achievement indeed. Psychoanalysis promises more than a geographic taxonomy of the mind. Thus, opposing those who wonder at the validity of psychoanalysis, that is, its "scientific value," Lacan does not merely assert its symbolic functioning but declares that of all scientific practices, "no praxis is more orientated towards that which, at the heart of experience, is the kernel of the real, than psycho-analysis" (*XI*, 53). And that adds another twist to the circumstance that, for Lacan and for anyone who has ever been involved in an analysis, means that what we call reality will "no longer [be] the same for us" (*E*, 122). For Lacan, "the Freudian unconscious is situated at that point, where, between cause and that which it effects, there is always something wrong" (*XI*, 22).

Nietzsche speaks to this "something wrong" as inherent in the concept of causality. Thus, by way of a mocking aphorism addressed to the imaginary dimension that always has a role to play in causal thinking, "Before the effect, one believes in different causes than one does afterward,"¹⁴ Nietzsche articulates the core of his critique of the very empirical logico-scientific doctrine of cause in a precise continuum with his articulation of its psychological origins.¹⁵ What is at stake is what he calls a *Friedenschluß*, the Peircean "quiescence of belief" that calms the psychic distress of not knowing rather than any kind of active causality. This redounds to a kind of primacy of the commonsense, of the debunking tendency, not as an evolved, late-enlightenment liberation from superstition and the tutelage of sub-

scription to a belief in supernatural causes, but effective from the start as part of the inherent dynamic of the mind and evident in the rustic world view from Hesiod up to the clerical worker of today: "it is at bottom only a question of wanting to get rid of oppressive ideas . . . the first idea which explains that the unknown is in fact the known does so much good that one 'holds it for true.' Proof by *pleasure* ('by potency') as criterion of truth."¹⁶ In the field of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the Real works as an overtly inverse cause, expressly following and thereby exposing the impossibility of the trajectory of classical causality as such. Thus Lacan could say in his late television interview that the Real works as a "pseudo-sexual spring."¹⁷ It is the intrusion of the symptom of a "demand that originates in the voice of the sufferer" (*T*, 7). Where Nietzsche could speak of the body as a "great intelligence, a multiplicity with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a herdsman,"¹⁸ Lacan, in as full accord as he can be, observes, "the subject of the unconscious is only in touch with the soul via the body" (*T*, 6). For Lacan, we recall, it is in language that we find the subject of the unconscious. Thus, in a dry reflection on his life's practice, that of analysis, Lacan could say that of the "two sides presented . . . by language," the one that "makes sense"—the analyst's discourse ("subject supposed to know" [*XI*, 269])—"pours out a flood of meaning to float the sexual boat" (*T*, 8). But he observes further, suggesting that the point of popular jokes about analysis—that it's all sex, sex, sex: repression, penis envy, naked need—strike home: "this meaning reduces to non-sense: the non-sense of the sexual relation, something that love stories have, throughout time, made obvious. Obvious to the point of stridency; which gives a lofty picture of human thought" (*T*, 8). And here the joke comes in as a jest, the mocking reminder that is the key signifier of the unconscious: "This is the high point of comedy, except that in comedy awareness of the nonrelation involved in getting it off, getting it off sexually, must be included" (*T*, 8). For Lacan, the Real, "the pseudo-sexual spring," serves to punctuate speech, nailing the subject's meaning and so ordering in reverse what was already, as a cause, as a series of causes which now have a name, which now make sense at the end of analysis, the end of which, for Lacan as for Freud, is the simple management of the symptom. "I do not love him [or her],' is sustained, Freud teaches us, . . . by reverberating against the real" (*T*, 10). Thus, the Imaginary of the ideal of

love, corresponding to a basic fantasy, will be the drawn effect of the recognition the subject always seeks. But here, Nietzsche's critique reminds us, we must ask after the nature and essence of a cause. For at bottom, fundamentally and at the very least, "We believed ourselves to be causal agents in the act of willing," and if Freud's achievement, following close on Nietzsche, has been to show that the Real cause is not what the subject thinks as subjective, willed agency but resides, in Lacan's words, in the subject of the unconscious, insufficient attention is paid to the implications of the laws of that locus, the psychic apparatus of the unconscious. Knowing no contradiction, atemporal, the unconscious is acausal. That acausality means that the effect, like a cannon-shot in a dream, works backward to produce its own causal chain, *seriatim*, down to the last details. For Nietzsche, we need to question not whether the cause is this immediate stimulus or that distant trauma but to inquire into the nature of causality as such. How do we know it, after Schopenhauer, after Kant, after Hume? We know it, the answer goes from these philosophers to the scholastics, to the Philosopher himself, Aristotle, by analogy. The ground of this analogical understanding of the logic of cause and effect is our own psychology, our own psyche: thought, will, desire where "we at least thought we were there *catching causality in the act . . .*" (TI, 49). But Nietzsche's account of the dream tells us that the direction of causality—which direction is the only thing we need to be sure about in order to know the cause from the effect—has at least in the imaginary process of the reverie, day and night, a different, indeed, as Lacan might say it, an indifferent directionality, which indifference points to the difference of desire, the Real difference at stake in desire. Nietzsche describes imaginary causes with the example of a dream. From "a distant cannon-shot, a cause is subsequently foisted (often a whole little novel in which precisely the dreamer is the chief character). The sensation, meanwhile, continues to persist, as a kind of resonance: it waits as it were, until the cause-creating drive permits it to step into the foreground—now no longer as a chance occurrence but as 'meaning.' The cannon-shot enters in a causal way, in an apparent inversion of time" (TI, 50). This inverse causality is the reverberation of the Real. It is "real that permits the effective unknotting of what makes the symptom hold together, namely a knot of signifiers" (T, 10).

We recall that the Imaginary affords the illusion of sufficiency. Hence, a direction, which is not the same as a directive, to the Real focuses the course of an analysis, whether this Real is understood as the neutral real of Freud's conceptualization or the mathematical formula or letter with which modern physics (mis-)identifies the Real, or, as Lacan has it, as *tuché*. *Tuché* is the Aristotelian concept of chance on the occasion of a lucky or unlucky break, the break in a chain of events that could not happen just so but only by chance. As Aristotle himself has it, "Luck [*tuché*] is an accidental cause in things generated by choice for the sake of something. Therefore luck and *thought* are concerned with the same thing; for choice does not exist without thought."¹⁹ Note that Aristotle's term "choice" signifies preference as the sign of thought, luck as the privileged cause in this encounter. Lacan chooses the same term as it reveals the eventuality of the Real, but insofar as it is fortuitous, insofar as it could have been otherwise, "—the encounter in so far as it may be missed, in so far as it is essentially the missed encounter—" (XI, 55). This missed encounter is "the real that lies behind the phantasy" (XI, 54). This elusive, "revelatory," miss of an encounter with the Real is the object of Freud's concern.²⁰ For Lacan, "what the unconscious does is to show us the gap through which neurosis recreates a harmony with a real—a real that may well not be determined" (XI, 22). He explains,

What is at stake in analysis is the advent in the subject of that little reality that this desire sustains in him with respect to the symbolic and imaginary fixations as the means of their agreement and our path is the intersubjective experience where this desire makes itself recognized. (E, 68)

And, "Analysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true speech and the realization by the subject of his history in relation to a future" (E, 88). But, as this last surprising reference suggests, true speech is not determined by its positivistic or merely logical value. Rather, true speech is the articulation of the Real, as this is given voice, in Heidegger's words, as "*Geläuter Stille*" or resonant, "ringing silence," a truth spoken in Nietzsche's words from the "mothers of being."²¹ It is because of the structure of the Imaginary and the Symbolic that true speech is missing in all but the chance encounter. Thus "the analyst is

a long way from directing the subject towards 'full' speech, or towards a coherent discourse" (*E*, 275)—and Lacan must ask whether

Psycho-analysis remain[s] a dialectical action in which the non-action of the analyst guides the subject's discourse towards the realization of his truth, or is it to be reduced to a phantasmatic relation in which "two abysses brush against each other" without touching . . . (*E*, 88)

For Lacan it is the illusory tendency to assume the former which betrays the subject of analysis, henceforward both vulnerable to and responsible for the discourses of the master projected from its part.

It is for this reason that the Real is encountered in the psychoanalytic experience in two ways, first in the analyst's refusal to reply, and second—because "there is no speech without a reply" (*E*, 40)—via the function of time in the course of an analysis. Although the term of analysis (as the term of anything for a subject) "can only be anticipated by the subject as indefinite" (*E*, 94), to define this term for the subject by fixing it in advance or acceding to indeterminacy, "invariably leaves the subject in the alienation of his truth" (*E*, 96). There is something other than the sober description of the "non-action of the analyst" as that which would or alone could guide the subject toward a realization of his or her truth. Rather this is the unconscious as the desire of the other. This first alternative is the popular vision of psychoanalysis, and one expects something like a "cure," a resolution. But on the other side of and in the service of this same ideal cure, the phantasmatic projection of "two abysses," glancing past any possible encounter with one another suggests a justification, indeed an ethical justification for Lacan's (in)famous "short sessions." From this perspective, Lacan's contractual disappointments, as insurgent repetitions of impossible finitude, reflect "nothing less than the historizing temporality of the experience of the transference" (*E*, 103).

Between Nietzsche and Lacan: Truth

Because the register of the Real includes human existence in its bodily and natural/social extension, the registers of the Imaginary and the Symbolic are not incidentally but intrinsically yoked together with the

Real, in a classic nexus Lacan describes as a *Borromean knot*. But the subtitle above announces the issue of truth "Between Nietzsche and Lacan." It would seem that truth speaks *between* philosophy and psychoanalysis, but we know that for Lacan the truth speaks as a lying truth in only psychoanalysis, not science, not philosophy, while for Nietzsche truth is an illusion. Nevertheless, if one reviews the foregoing, if one considers the conceptual tangle of registers and orders, the dynamic interchange between the subjects of analysis and analyst, full and empty speech, one will find nothing but the proper world, the words of psychoanalysis. Where is one to begin to insert the words of the philosopher, the truth of Nietzsche? And to admit Žižek's point above, Nietzsche is a very hard case. When Lacan speaks well of philosophy, he speaks of Hegel and Heidegger, he speaks of Plato and Aristotle, and dialectically of Kant, aligning the foundations of his ethics of psychoanalysis with Sade as an erotic ethics, but in all Lacan hardly mentions Nietzsche, save to denounce him as a name, an image.

For Lacan, the analytic commerce with the truth of the unconscious—the subject's truth, as the truth of the Other, is best recognized "in the defences that are set up in the subject against it" (*E*, 118). This reference to the birth of truth in speech (which is also to speak of language, or the inscription of truth "in our very flesh") "brings us up against the reality of what is neither true nor false" (*E*, 47). We shall see that this reality is the Real, precisely taken in Nietzsche's sense. This is the truth that insists even in denial. It is the word of truth that warns us that it will sieze us "from behind in either case. Whether you flee me in fraud or think to entrap me in error, I will reach you in the mistake against which you have no refuge" (*E*, 122). Speaking of truth and lie—deceit and illusion—in this fashion, we express nothing but Nietzsche's truth of truth. So it would seem—but Lacan denies any connection with Nietzsche in summary fashion, usually reserved for deprecating opinion, psychoanalytic or otherwise, other than his own.

I am not reviving here the shoddy Nietzschean notion of the lie of life, nor am I astonished that one should believe oneself capable of belief, nor do I accept that it is enough to wish for something sufficiently to will it. (*E*, 118)

In true Freudian fashion, that is, as Freud himself denies Nietzsche, Lacan denies Nietzsche, not once, but three times.²² For Lacan, the truth that persists is not Nietzsche's excess of truth and lie in any moral, scientific, or aesthetic sense. Instead, what has to be noted is that the "discourse of error, its articulation in acts, could bear witness to the truth against evidence itself" (*E*, 121). To think this truth, "against evidence itself," is not merely to think the hurdy-gurdy song of perspectivism, that relativism which Lacan defines as the "illusory truth that can be reduced to the illusion of truth" (*E*, 120). And yet, this does not mean that Nietzsche's approach to the question of truth is irrelevant here.

After all, we need hardly be reminded that denial is the psychoanalytic trope par excellence. In the domain of analytic discourse, denial is the sign of a turning, a figure of significance, to be traced on its surface and mined in its depths. Speaking of the discourse of denial, Lacan speaks of a truth in Nietzsche's fashion, or at least in a style that matches Nietzsche's own voice. Thus, one is not surprised to be able to uncover parallel after parallel between Lacan's own account of truth and Nietzsche's inaugural attempt to conceive the truth of science under the light of art, refracting thereby the ultimate optic, which illumination is that of life. For the barest hint of such a parallel reading, which is all I may attempt in passing here, consider the trajectory of Lacan's project in "The Freudian Thing." In each case a Nietzschean node may be found when, for example, Lacan describes the scientific fascination with truth as an *unveiling*—and where the effort is to uncover truth's *nakedness*; and when, for Lacan, only the naïve imagine that such a truth, surprised thusly, is not to be taken as a woman; and when Lacan declares the hidden locus of truth, "the well, an unseemly, not to say, malodorous place" (*E*, 121); and when Lacan speaks in truth's voice, and describes seekers of truth as embracing not truth but only her "subsidiaries," only to discard these in disappointment; and then when Lacan fixes his ultimate reference in a divine archaic context (even if this context names Apollo a thief, and speaks of Diana and not Dionysos, or else Actaeon and not Mephistopheles/Faust); and so on. At each juncture, Lacan traces not only a Nietzschean concern with truth and the hypothetical question introducing *Beyond Good and Evil*, but also however incidentally or accidentally, the very remarkable course of Nietzsche's first text, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Whether the letter of Lacan's thought was conceived with

any deliberate, plundering reference to Nietzsche is not my concern. Lacan and Nietzsche converge. And for the present topic, it is enough to note this convergence to observe an evolution in both texts that treats the Real in the same terms. And, stretching the parallel of a question against the issue of parallels, let us recall that if, for Lacan, Freud himself may not be lined up with a cosmic tradition, simply inserted into "a milky way to the heavens of European culture in which Balthazar Gracian and La Rochefoucauld shine as stars of the first order," turning then to install Nietzsche in this same stellar array but "as a nova as dazzling as it is short-lived" (*E*, 119) is as mistaken a project. Nietzsche must be more than just the remainder in this exercise, as the shoddy projection of his spectacular cultural success. Even as abhorred, even for Lacan.

On Nietzsche and the Real

In what follows, I suggest that Nietzsche's conception of nature—an anti-cosmos, which dominion includes not only the world, but the gods and the earth, reason and desire, the symbolic and the animal (human) body—is a notion corresponding to the value of the register of the Real for Lacan.²³ Nietzsche warns against the anthropomorphism of any projection of simplicity or law in nature:

The astral order in which we live is an exception; this order and the relative duration that depends on it have . . . made possible an exception of exceptions: the formation of the organic. The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos—in the sense not of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms. (*GS*, 109, 168)

For Nietzsche, nature comprises the notions of "power," "life," or "will," and the human morphology of theoretical knowledge and morality, the hierarchy of the body, "the relations of dominance under which the phenomenon 'life' arises."²⁴ Consequently, the Nietzschean nature (*sive chaos*) that is proposed as a correlate to Lacan's Real is neither the (symbolic) physical nature of natural science nor the phantasmic nature of the romantic imagination.²⁵

Nietzsche opposes the imaginary ideal of nature with a picture of an inherently contradictory power, "at once fruitful and barren and uncertain; think of indifference itself as a power."²⁶ Conceiving "indifference itself as a power," we are led to the point of Lacan's own approximation of the Real as "the impact with the obstacle . . . the fact that things do not turn out all right straight away, as the hand that is held out to the external object wishes" (XI, 167). In other, plainer words directed to an English-speaking public, Lacan explains, "The lack of the lack makes the real."²⁷

It is in this frustrating sense that the Real is "the impossible" (XI, 167). And it will do to note that this naming ventures the only possible symbolization of the Real. In Lacan's insistent terminology, the ultimate discovery of psychoanalysis is the Real, the impossible, understood as "the encounter in so far as it may be missed, in so far as it is essentially the missed encounter" (XI, 55). What Lacan refers to as the *points de capiton* in an analysis (E, 154) are the encounters, the "radical points in the real," permitting its recognition, in its symbolic insurgence, in its "abeyance . . . awaiting attention" (XI, 56).

In a passage that underscores without naming the body, the subject is projected along the Symbolic and Imaginary margins of the dehiscence of the Real: "the path of the subject passes between the two walls of the impossible" (XI, 167). Thus Lacan's most psychoanalytically perspicacious (dangerous) expression interprets the body as it is feminized, as related to woman, the "lack of the lack," the Real as

what the living being loses, that part of himself qua living being, in reproducing himself through the way of sex. This lack is real because it relates to something real, namely, that the living being, by being subject to sex, has fallen under the blow of individual death. (XI, 205)

The Real is "that which always comes back to the same place."²⁸ The Real is the circuit of life and death, the incoherent affinity of body and world, the desexualized linkage of sexual love and bodily death.²⁹

For Nietzsche, as the potential raw chance of nature, chaos is (from a Lacanian view) informed or interpreted from the structuring perspective of inorganic and organic interests. From a human perspective, the resulting arrangement of this information is the cosmos as we

know it. Thus, it is the unified multiplicity of the body, not its “‘under-wills,’ or under-souls,” (*BGE*, 19, 31) which reflects the orderly image of the cosmos. But that phantasmatic order, as Lacan teaches us, is as ambiguous and illusory on the one side of the mirror as it is on the other. The rational, measured reality of natural science (the symbolic ideal of science) is an illusion, but a necessary, “fundamental” illusion, for “without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical, without . . . numbers, mankind could not live.”³⁰ For Lacan, offering a similar account but without sharing the vigor of Nietzsche’s challenge, “experimental science is not so much defined by the quantity to which it is in fact applied as by the measurement it introduces into the real” (*E*, 74). Physics, the science of the Real, is for Lacan, “a mental fabrication whose instrument is the mathematical symbol” (*E*, 74). And for Nietzsche, of course, we recall that physics is “only an interpretation and arrangement of the world” (*BGE*, 22, 34).

In place of a blind trust in physics, in place of our human “prejudice in favour of reason [inducing] us to posit unity, duration, substance, cause, materiality, being” (*TI*, 37), Nietzsche advocates the view of the new-style philosopher, the “free-spirit,” patterned as the Dionysian tragic artist. But such a revision is not proposed idly. The problem with the “prejudice in favour of reason” is that, like all prejudices, it not only reflects a particular causality but is preserved at the expense of alternative schemes. In question is intellectual reason, and it is not the only kind. For Nietzsche, the body itself represents a reason of another, multifarious kind, akin to nature conceived in its total character as chaos. The body seen in its chaotic complexity, as “a multiplicity with one sense,”³¹ is the microcosm—*chaos sive natura* writ small. With a proto-phenomenological flourish, Nietzsche can propose that “The grounds upon which ‘this’ world has been designated as apparent establishes rather its reality—*another* kind of reality is absolutely indemonstrable” (*TI*, 38). This reality corresponds to the Real of Lacan’s designation as the impossible, as *tuché*, the chance or barely elided encounter. And the Real, understood as the chance encounter, the encounter of chance, resonates with Nietzsche’s celebrated expression of the “necessity” and “calculability” of events in nature: “*not* because laws prevail in it but because laws are absolutely *lacking*, and every power draws its ultimate consequences at every moment”

(*BGE*, 22). The spirit of this passage is repeated in Lacan's observation that "the exact sciences do nothing other than tie the real to a syntax."³²

Yet, Nietzsche does not (and Lacan does) presume a pathological re-presentation of the Real as the problem of the frustration/support of the desire of the subject of the unconscious. For his part, Nietzsche finds the problem in the very perspectival structure of knowledge. The institution of the scientific real, as the only reality, as *true*, divides "the world into a 'real' and an 'apparent' world" (*TI*, 39). This institution is decadent, "a symptom of *declining* life." Such decadence betrays the triumph of nihilism because the world that is denied as mere appearance is the bodily, sensual, world of the individual—the ineffable. For the philosopher, the questions left out of the scientific account must always be raised against the world's interpretation of physics. With an example that today would not raise any eyebrows, much less the hackles of contemporary chemists, Nietzsche proposes that the ostensive proof of the principle of the conservation of matter, "the unchanging in chemistry," fails on the most vulgar level, by trading on a simple substitutional identity: "To assert that diamond, graphite, and carbon are identical is to read off the facts naively from the surface. . . . Merely because no loss in substance can be shown on the scales!"³³ For Nietzsche, who knew a bit of chemistry, the molecular differences which "we cannot see or weigh" would have to be taken into account. But this reflective necessity can be ignored in virtue of the subtle warrant of our logical prejudices: "We have *slipped in* the invariant, my physicist friends, deriving it from metaphysics as always."³⁴ It goes without saying that the fashions of science, if not those of metaphysics, have changed.

Beyond the bland reduction of the Real "to a little bundle of formulae," in Lacan's words (*II*, 299), and as a corrective against the life-and-complexity-denying simplicity of the physical sciences, Nietzsche sets the possibility of tragic art: "The tragic artist . . . *affirms* all that is questionable and terrible in existence, he is *Dionysian*" (*TI*, 39).

The Dionysian understanding of the nature of the world as terrifying reflects the rigor of the Real. This severity inspires the shrill wisdom of the tortured Silenus,³⁵ and Lacan echoes the same antique Sophoclean coin, referring at once to the Greek tragedy of Oedipus and the viscid, Victorian horror of Poe's M. Valdemar: "the greatest

boon is not to be;/ But life begun, soonest to end is best" (II, 230). And for good measure, Lacan invokes Freud's own expression, "Life is a blister, a mould characterized . . . by nothing beyond its aptitude for death" (II, 232).

The Subject of the "Little" Reality

In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche gives the source of the Apollonian ideal of Western culture, as a flight from the Real: "The Greek knew and felt the terror and horror of existence. That he might exist at all, he had to interpose between himself and life the radiant dreambirth of the Olympians" (BT, 3, 42). This necessary invention of the gods is also the idealization of beauty. The illusion of truth in culture, known in this connection as the truth of illusion, represents life "as an aesthetic phenomenon."³⁶ The concomitant valorization of the aesthetic individual (as beautiful) is here presented as *truth*.³⁷ As a consequence of this illusion of truth, in its religious, moral, scientific transformations, life becomes "bearable for us" (GS, 107), that is to say, able to be lived by a people who are no longer equal to the sublimity of the tragic artist's, or Dionysian, world view. The aesthetic ideal of truth, in its scientifico-technical guise as Reason, is the modern equivalent of the Platonic accomplishment of sense-mastery: ". . . by means of pale, cold, prey concept nets . . . [thrown] . . . over the motley whirl of the senses" (BGE, 14, 26). But, insofar as the named or artful truth of illusion, the illusion as such, slides into the unconscious, i.e., from possible historical awareness, to that extent is the will to life transformed into a dream of life. This dream of life is not death, in fact, the one thing it flees is its proximity to death. Thus, denying death, denying life, the suppression of illusion as illusion in a mechanism akin to the psychoanalytic concept of repression, results in a life against death.³⁸

For Nietzsche, the ordinary role of the understanding is joined to what Lacan names a "general *méconnaissance*."³⁹ Nietzsche speaks of this as the "fundamental will of the [popular] spirit."⁴⁰ This is the leveling perspective of everyday, social consciousness. Consciousness, as Nietzsche sees it, is not the simple openness of perceptual awareness; rather, "the world of which we can become conscious is only a

surface—and a sign-world, . . . whatever becomes conscious becomes by the same token, shallow, thin, relatively stupid, general . . .” (*GS*, 354, 299–300). Nietzsche’s understanding of consciousness and its correlative illusion of truth is, then, best understood with reference to two Lacanian registers, not merely the Symbolic but also the Imaginary. Regarding contemporary Western culture, Lacan refers to “the subject who loses his meaning in the objectifications of discourse . . . [as] . . . the most profound alienation of the subject in our scientific discourse” (*E*, 70). Lacan’s notion of alienation is a reduction of the subject fitting Nietzsche’s understanding of the inherent nihilism of modern scientific consciousness.

Nietzsche’s prescription for a seeker after knowledge describes an accomplishment structuring the subject in the Symbolic that is the juncture of the Symbolic and the Real, which accomplishment can be brought to being in the course of a successful analysis. For Nietzsche,

This will to mere appearance, to simplification, to the mask, to the cloak, in short to the superficial—for every surface is a cloak—is counteracted by that sublime inclination of the seeker after knowledge which takes a profound, many-sided and thorough view of things. (*BGE*, 230, 142)

For Nietzsche, this deft opposition is attained by no conversion of spirit; neither is it to be won by an accident of illumination. What must be counteracted is the “fundamental will of the spirit.” Hence, the seeker after knowledge must be an investigator endowed with power and the sublimity of an inclination that “will take such a view: as a kind of cruelty of the intellectual consciousness and taste” (*BGE*, 230, 142). This same profundity, sensitivity to multiplicity, ambiguity, and capacity for thoroughness and, perhaps, something like a “kind of cruelty” is required of the Lacanian analyst.

Illusion is regarded both as necessary and as inherently pernicious by both thinkers.⁴¹ The stakes of the illusion of truth are those of the disjunctive option poised between living life in its fullness and living life as a retreat before the anticipated painful or troubling consequences of such fullness. For Nietzsche, the fear of the possibility of pain is accurate enough: “. . . all that comes into being must be ready for a sorrowful end . . . all becoming and growing, all that guarantees the future, *postulates* pain” (*BT*, 17, 104; *TI*, 110).

In the Dionysian vision of the tragic artist, the artist of life's perpetual tragedy, Nietzsche asks "What does the *tragic artist communicate of himself?* Does he not display precisely the condition of *fearlessness* in the face of the fearsome and the questionable?" (*TI*, 82). This fearlessness confronts the raw reality of the world in all its pain and excess. For Lacan's purposes, this fearlessness is an anticipatory confrontation with the Real, a "subjective bringing to realization of being-for-death" (*E*, 68). This is the significance of Freud's discovery of the unconscious, not that there is an unconscious—this, Lacan reminds us, is not even Freud's invention. What is capital here is the function and field of the unconscious structured as language: "it *speaks*, and, no doubt, where it is least expected, namely, where there is pain" (*E*, 125). If the work of analysis yields the full speech of the subject of speech, the subject that is "spoken" rather than speaking, then the speech uttered and heard in the reply made even in silence is the recurrent truth between the Symbolic and the Real: the impossibility of speech.⁴²

For those who are human, Nietzsche will maintain, the only possibility for truth is in the art that is aware of itself as art. Truth must be found in naming the illusion as illusion. But it is Nietzsche's insight that we are not equipped to find truth without untruth, and hence that there is no truth without untruth, without lies. For Lacan, "The mirage of truth, from which only lies can be expected (this is what, in polite language, we call 'resistance'), has no other term than the satisfaction that marks the end of analysis" (*XI*, viii). The ultimate results of Lacan's investigation are directed to "those who are prepared to run the risk of attesting at best to the lying truth" (*XI*, ix). This is evidenced by the connection between Nietzsche's notion of truth and the responsibility of the "new-style philosopher," and Lacan's hopes for analysis based upon the virtues (functioning not upon the privileges of insight but upon ethical responsibility) of the Lacanian-styled analyst. The analyst's art is to be found in this attestation to the "lying truth"—the "truth we repress." "Indeed, how could there not," Lacan asks "be truth about lying?" (*XI*, 38). And it is this lying truth that reveals nothing less than the "subject of the unconscious," which for Lacan, "is a spoken being" (*T*, 114). For Lacan, if it can be followed, this truth is "Deceit itself," tracked "through a crack too narrow to find for want of pretence and through the inaccessible cloud of the dream, through the motiveless fascination of the mediocre and the

seductive impasse of absurdity" (*E*, 123). The Nietzschean attestation given in the analyst's refusal names the illusion as illusion, and thus brings the speech of the subject from emptiness to full—or true—speech. Lacan explains that "it is in the gift of speech that all the reality of its effects resides; for it is by way of this gift that all reality has come to man and it is by his continued art that he maintains it" (*E*, 106). The truth of the subject is not to be found in a representation of reality but has reference to the unconscious domain, in the structured field of language, that is the Symbolic order. For Lacan, Freud's insight offers

not that which can be the object of knowledge, but that . . . which teaches us that we bear witness to it as much and more in our whims, our assertions, our phobias and fetishes, as in our more or less civilized personalities. (*E*, 174)

The truth of the subject, then, is the truth of the subject of the unconscious. As the other, this truth does not consist in a binary exclusion but insists across affirmation and denial. In this sense, one cannot conduct a search for truth without a clear regard for the boundaries of the unconscious in Lacan's sense, where Lacan could declare the limited sense of Rimbaud's apothegmic insight for philosophy and psychoanalysis alike: "I is an other." Any other view is an image of truth—and for Lacan, only a kind of madness, however civilized a madness it may be.

Conclusion

The Western "failure" to come to terms with the brutal limitation and boundless fertility of life may be found in the Imaginary Ideal of the Symbolic which is an expression of the Symbolic as the Real. We have noted that the project of science represents reality by means of mathematical symbolization. But the Real, the impossible, embodies the contradictions Nietzsche finds in the excessive heart of nature—"the mothers of being whose names are: Delusion, Will, Woe" (*BT*, 20, 124).

Caught between nature and desire—the real we are used to, the

truth we repress⁴³—the human animal takes the impossible contradiction within and keeps it down with a lie. This is Lacan's version of the eternal return as desire: "the function of lure in the service of a need" (*E*, 173). Against this lie, Lacan's search is for the truth of desire, the true word of the subject, that is the subject of the word uttered in full speech. The full word is cognizant of its deliverance from/embodiment in language, acknowledging its origin in that which is Other than the subject. But that only means that this fullness is that of paradox and impossibility. The analyst attends to what is spoken by this Other, i.e., to the "lying truth," by hearing in what is lightly spoken by the subject of the day its dark counter in what is Other than the subject. This is the "law of *méconnaissance*" ruling analysis, from the side of analyst and analysand. Speaking to the analyst about the analysand, in "The Freudian Thing," Lacan observes:

it is literally of something else, that is, of something other than that which is in question when he speaks of himself, and which is the thing that speaks to you, a thing which, whatever he says, would remain forever inaccessible to him, if in being speech addressed to you it could not elicit its response in you and if, from having heard its message in this inverted form, you could not, by returning it to him, give him the double satisfaction of having recognized it and of making him recognize its truth. (*E*, 131)

Lacan, in the television interview that was transformed like his oral presentations into a book, into an authorization, begins by saying, "I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth, because . . . saying it all is literally impossible: words fail. Yet it's through this very impossibility that truth holds onto the real" (*T*, 3). For Nietzsche as for Lacan, the structure of language grounds the possibility of creation and freedom as the condition of the subject's meaning. In the subject's submission to the Symbolic order, the possibility of meaning is found in the subject's resolution to live his or her finitude toward the utmost possibility of his or her essential impossibility or *potentiality* for Being. This existential orientation is given an articulative understanding in the juncture of the Symbolic and the Real. As we have already observed of this juncture, in analysis this encounter on the side of the subject is the transference; for the analyst it is his

abstention, his refusal to reply . . . it is in this negativity in so far as it is a pure negativity . . . that lies the junction between the symbolic and the real. (*E*, 166)

For Lacan, the meaning presented at this junction is a “mortal meaning”—“truth proves to be complex in essence, humble in its offices and alien to reality, stubborn to the choice of sex, akin to death, and all in all, rather inhuman . . .” (*E*, 145).

From a Lacanian perspective, Nietzsche’s doctrine of the Eternal Return can be interpreted as an approach to finitude (the Real), not a metaphysical description (of reality). What Nietzsche called “the greatest weight” is the existential imperative that is the consequent reverberation of the doctrine of the Eternal Return: the “question in each and every thing, ‘Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?’” (*GS*, 341, 274). To say yes,

how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to *crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal? (*GS*, 341, 274)

Understanding the Real with Lacan as “that which always returns,” Nietzsche’s account of the Eternal Return is a prescription for living that takes account of the psychoanalytic insight that one lives not just once but, because of the impossible significance of the Real we are used to, because of time and memory, because of the unconscious weight of language, because of the lack, and because of desire—the unbearable, the discovery that “one isn’t it” (*E*, 277), or in Lacan’s own conception of “something real, namely that the living being, by being subject to sex, has fallen under the blow of individual death” (*XI*, 205)—one can only live in the eternal return that is seal of finitude: thus for once *and* always.

Notes

1. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), p. 45. Hereafter cited as *XI*.

2. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 131, p.

132. Hereafter cited as *SOI*. Žižek makes the same general point in at least three separate texts, and as the reading follows straightforwardly from Lacan's biography/bibliography, it is a common one. Thus one can also see Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), which characterizes (p. 135) "the emergence of the real (*le réel*) as a major theoretical category in Lacan's later work, a category rather shockingly dislodging the symbolic and the imaginary from his attention." A closer, and possibly more Lacanian—stylistically and spiritually—account is offered by Philippe Julien, *Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud: The real, the symbolic, and the imaginary*, trans. Devra Beck Simiu (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

3. This is evidenced by Judith Butler's extensive discussion of Žižek's work in her recent *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London: Routledge, 1993), see pp. 187 ff., "Arguing with the Real." Elizabeth Grosz's *Jacques Lacan: a Feminist Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1990), which offers many powerful and valuable nuances, probably errs with the straightforward claim (p. 34): "The child . . . is born into the order of the Real." But this is a stylistic or largely topological difficulty (the order of the Real might be better rendered as it renders the subject, as the torus or core of the Real), because a subsequent properly nuanced expression offers the useful insight into the Real as "an anatomical, 'natural' order (nature in the sense of resistance rather than positive substance), as a pure plenitude or fullness."

4. Julien, *Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud, op.cit.*, p. 184 (Citing Seminar XXVII, 1980 "Dissolution" Session, March 11 1980. Published in Ornicar during 1980 and 1981).

5. François Roustang, *The Lacanian Delusion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 59. Hereafter cited as *LD*.

6. For Bernard Baas, "la lecture des textes philosophiques de la tradition pouvait positivement courir le risque de se mettre à l'épreuve de la pensée de Lacan." Pp. 8–9, *Le désir pur. Parcours philosophiques dans les parages de J. Lacan* (Louvain: Peeters, 1992). John Rajchman outlines Lacan's "third period" (sixties and seventies) Real as constituting a veritable expressly rigorous—Žižek's word would be "rigid"—ethical question on a par with, but providing a plain challenge to, philosophy: "Psychoanalysis is an ethics 'of the real,' and confronts the 'idealisms' of philosophical ethics with it." *Truth and Eros: Foucault, Lacan, and the Question of Ethics* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p. 44. Hereafter cited as *TE*.

7. Borch-Jacobsen's point is that Lacan, precisely as an autodidact, "faisait voisiner Freud avec Hegel et Heidegger, lisait Kant 'avec' Sade, formulait la sexualité humaine en termes logico-mathématiques, convoquait pêle-mêle Frege et les inscriptions rudimentaires de Mas d'Azil, Joyce et les noeuds borroméens, Saint Augustin et Saussure." Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan. Le Maître absolu* (Paris: Flammarion, 1990), p. 16.

8. *Lacan avec les philosophes* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991), including roundtables and essays on the topics of "Lacanian Ethics," "Negations and the Universe of Discourse," "Lacan and Modern Science," "Philosophy and the Orders of the Real, the Symbolic, the Imaginary," along with readings posing "Lacan with Kant: The idea of symbolism"; "Lacan with Plato: Is the matheme an Idea"; "Lacan with Heidegger," "Lacan, Kojève, et al." See also Rachjman, *Truth and Eros*, Peter Widmer, "*Bin ich da*

wo ich denke? Descartes und Lacan,” *Studia Philosophica* 45 (1986): pp. 202–213. Jens Schreiber, “Die Ordnung des Genießens. Nietzsche mit Lacan, *Literaturmagazin* 12. Nietzsche, eds. Nicolas Born, Jürgen Manthey, Delf Schmidt (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1980), pp. 204–234, Joan Copjec, “Vampires, Breast-Feeding, and Anxiety,” *October* 58 (1991): pp. 25–43, and her *Read My Desire* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), along with Žižek, etc.

9. Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 3.

10. *SOI*, pp. 1 and 154, respectively. Of Habermas’s *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne* (1985), Žižek asks, “Why this refusal to confront Lacan directly, in a book which includes lengthy discussions of Bataille, Derrida, and, above all, Foucault, the real partner of Habermas?” The question is insightful and the connective comparison of Habermas and Foucault on target. Why then would Žižek fail to notice the absence of Nietzsche’s name from the very same discussion, a signal characteristic tic of the later Habermas, whose much cited final chapter pressing Nietzsche into epistemological service in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968) actually discusses him in less than ten pages? A longer discussion would likely have proved subversive, keeping Habermas in the Post-Structuralist position he would rather repudiate than engage.

11. *SOI*, p. 154. Note that Žižek conflates Nietzsche with Derrida, “the real partner” of Žižek here (cf. Žižek on Habermas and Derrida), by noting that Lacan’s thesis “that truth is structured like a fiction has nothing at all to do with a post-structuralist reduction of the truth-dimension to a textual ‘truth-effect.’” Žižek continues his fit, chiding Habermas for instituting an axis that would link without distinction Marx-Nietzsche-Freud for a popular audience in his chapter “The Obscene Object of Postmodernism,” in *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

12. See Lacan, “The Mirror Stage,” *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W.Norton, 1977), p. 3. Hereafter cited as *E*. For Lacan, it is important that the Surrealists could regard this as an epistemological limit. Nietzsche employs a parallel formula which opens an ambivalent dimension in comparing Nietzsche and Lacan, when he speaks of the “*kleinen Fehler*” that don’t count for our very great technical demands. And raising the question after technology, Heidegger’s ethical claim that redemption must be effected “here and now”—if it is to be effected at all—“in little things.”

13. Lacan, “Preface to the English-Language Edition,” *XI*, p. vii.

14. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, 1974) 217, p. 210. Hereafter cited as *GS*.

15. I wish to thank Holger Schmid in particular, but also David Allison, Howard Caygill, Paul Miklowitz, and all the participants in the sesquicentennial conference *Nietzsche and the Coming Millennium: The Music of the Best Future*, held in Fiesole, Italy, July 1994, for their insights returning me to an earlier question concerning Nietzsche’s notion of causality. See my Nietzsche’s *Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press,

1994), and my "Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: The Musical Pathos of Truth," Duncan Large, ed., *Nietzsche's Happy Returns*, forthcoming.

16. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 51. Hereafter cited as *TI*.

17. Lacan, *Televisión/A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, trans. Denis Hollier, Rosalind Kraus, and Annette Michelson/trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), p. 10. Hereafter cited as *T*.

18. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p. 61. Hereafter cited as *TSZ*.

19. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book K, 1065a 30, trans. H. Apostle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), p. 188.

20. *XI*, pp. 53–56. Also: 39, 49–52.

21. See Heidegger's essay "Language" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). Nietzsche's reference to the "mothers of being" (*Birth of Tragedy*, 20) recalls Goethe's Faust. See below.

22. See David B. Allison's discussion of P.L. Assoun, *Freud et Nietzsche* (Paris: PUF, 1980) in *Art & Text* 37 (1990): pp. 103–110.

23. Nietzsche, *GS*, pp. 109, 168. For Nietzsche's expression of "Chaos sive natura," see the *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe* v. IX, p. 519.

24. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972) 20, p. 31. Hereafter cited as *BGE*. The complex definition of nature (*sive chaos*) is not to be understood as representing any kind of in-itself. Thus, although it might be useful to be able to characterize the difference between the world of the subject of meaning and the Real as that between a phenomenal (phenomenological) subject-oriented account and an accounting given in terms of the Kantian *noumenon*, such a distinction could only be false. For Kant, the *noumenon* is "a thing which is not to be thought as an object of the sense but as a thing in itself" [*Critique of Pure Reason*, B310]. The concept of the *noumenon* is thought through the understanding. Thus, even though the concept of the *noumenon* is given in intuition and is "merely a limiting concept" (B311), it functions in what Lacan would designate as the Symbolic domain. The *noumenon* is not the Real.

25. Cf. Lacan, "Function and Field of Speech and Language," *E.*, pp. 73–77. As a serious, alternative scientific account of nature, Nietzsche observes that "the world seen from within, the world described and defined according to its "intelligible character" it would be "will to power" and nothing else." (*BGE*, 36, 49).

26. *BGE*, pp. 9, 20. To think indifference as a power is to think of a power that leads in no special direction, tending towards nothing determinate. This is not contrary to Nietzsche's doctrine of perspectivism because it represents the view of the observer, not nature.

27. Lacan, "Preface," *XI*, p. ix.

28. Namely, "to the place where the subject in so far as he thinks, where the *res cogitans*, does not meet it" (*XI*, 49).

29. The Real of Lacan's discourse needs this bodily "real that might be attained in the sexual goal" (*XI*, 102).

30. *BGE*, pp. 4, 17. For Nietzsche, nature is "prodigal beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without aims or intentions, without mercy or justice." (cf. note 14) What nature lacks in this catalog is meaningfulness. That is only to say that as it neither mirrors the human image nor is it effectively ordered to subjective human purposes, nature lacks significance in itself and for humanity. As observed above, for both Nietzsche and Lacan, this account of nature needs to be distinguished from the very significant function of nature as it is the object of scientific investigation.

31. *TSZ*, 61.

32. Lacan, "Psychoanalysis and Cybernetics," *Seminar II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*, 1954–1955, trans. S. Tomaselli (Cambridge, 1988), p. 305. Hereafter cited as *II*.

33. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* 623, pp. 333–334.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 333.

35. Silenus was the satyr companion to Dionysus who spat in answer to a tyrant's eager demand "What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to be, to be *nothing*. But the second best for you is—to die soon." Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (New York: Random House, 1967), Section 3, p. 42. Hereafter cited as *BT*. The satyr's pronouncement undermines the implicit value of existence as such. This charge, from its expression here in Nietzsche's first book, is answered—not denied—throughout the body and spirit of Nietzsche's work.

36. In his preface, "Attempt at a self-criticism," to *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche observes that the conceptual key to the text is that "the existence of the world is *justified* only as an aesthetic phenomenon" (p. 22).

37. So Nietzsche continues, "completely wrapped up in this illusion and composed of it, we are compelled to consider this illusion as empirical reality."

38. "It is an eternal phenomena: the insatiable will always find a way to detain its creature in life and compel them to live on, by means of an illusion spread over the nature of things. One is chained by the Socratic love of knowledge and the delusion of being able thereby to heal the eternal wound of existence" (*BT*, 18, 109).

39. This commonsense or ordinary dimension of "the people" is reflected in Lacan's recurrent diatribes against contemporary, especially American, approaches to psychoanalytic practice (which he criticizes as "two-body" analysis).

40. For Nietzsche, this will represents the drive to "appropriate the foreign . . . assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the manifold, and to overlook or repulse whatever is totally contradictory. . . . An apparently opposite drive serves this same will: a suddenly erupting decision in favour of ignorance, of deliberate exclusion . . . an internal No to this or that thing" (*BGE*, 230, 141). We can leave the choice to read this account as a psychopathology of the everyday or whatever to psychoanalysts.

41. What is needed is an awareness of the source of truth in the intersubjective domain, which prescinds from taking illusion, qua illusion, as truth.

42. Cf. Lacan, *E*, p. 40. See too Lacan's list of notes offered towards the conclusion of "Direction of treatment and principles of its power" (*E*, 275).

43. Cf. Lacan's original apposition, "We are used to the real. The truth we repress" (*E*, 169).