

AFTER YOU DISCOVERED ME, IT WAS NO GREAT FEAT TO FIND ME. THE PROBLEM NOW IS HOW TO LOSE ME...

(F. W. Nietzsche; from a letter to Scandinavian critic and author Georg Brandes, January 1889)

Monday, March 07, 2011
CVSP 204 General Lecture
Hani Hassan
hh26@aub.edu.lb

FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZSCHE: PHILOSOPHY WITH A HAMMER

I. LIFE AND WORKS:

- Oct. 1844: Friedrich Wilhem Nietzsche born in Roken, Prussian Saxony, into a committed Lutheran Family;
- 1864: enters Bonn University as a student of theology and philology;
- 1865: transfers to Leipzig University; abandons his study of theology; encounters the works of Arthur Schopenhauer;
- 1869: appointed chair of classical philology at Basel University; awarded his doctorate from Leipzig without examination;
- 1872: publishes his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*;
- 1879: resigns his post at Basel;
- 1889: mental followed by physical collapse;
- August 25, 1900: F. W. Nietzsche dies.



Selected published works:

1872: *The Birth of Tragedy*; 1878: *Human All Too Human*; 1883-1885: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; **1886: *Beyond Good and Evil***; 1887: *On The Genealogy of Morals*; 1888: *Ecce Homo*; 1889: *Twilight of the Idols*.

II. PHILOSOPHY: PAST AND FUTURE:

a. HISTORY OF AN ERROR:

- Plato as the root of error: the invention of the good-in-itself (Preface and Part II: 190, 191...)
- Metaphysics of truth: the quest for the world 'more real' (Part I: 1, 2, 11, 16; Part VII: 299...)
- Religion and Morality: a better world 'here', a better world 'hereafter' (Part V: 186, 197-198, 202, 216, 219, 222-223...)
- Politics: a better world 'for the future' (Part II: 44; Part VII: 232...)

b. ENTER NIETZSCHE:

- Prelude to a philosophy of the future: exposing the lie (Part II: 34, 43, 44; Part V: 203...)
- Overthrowing the Idols of the past: a revaluation of values (Part I: 4, 23...)
- Slave morality vs. Master morality (Part V: 199, 201, 202, 260...)
- A *No* to this world vs. a *Yes* to this world!
- The quest for the elevation of the type 'man' (Part II: 29, 41; Part IX: 257, 262...)
- The new justification of life (Part IX: 258...)

III. CLOSING QUESTION MARKS:

- ❖ Reevaluating the revaluation?
 - ❖ A new Idolatry?
 - ❖ Mankind vs. *Overman*: a question of value?
-

Excerpt from Nietzsche's letter to his sister, Elizabeth Forster-Nietzsche, Christmas 1887:

...You have committed one of the greatest stupidities—for yourself and for me! Your association with an anti-Semitic chief expresses a foreignness to *my* whole way of life which fills me again and again with ire or melancholy. [...] It is a matter of honor with me to be absolutely clear and unequivocal in relation to anti-Semitism, namely, *opposed* to it, as I am in my writings... My disgust with this party (which would like the benefit of my name only too well!) is as pronounced as possible --- and that I am unable to do anything against it, that the name of Zarathustra is used in every *Anti-Semitic Correspondence Sheet*, has almost made me sick several times.

Selected Nietzsche quotes:

- ❖ Against the shortsighted.— Do you think this work must be fragmentary because I give it to you (and have to give it to you) in fragments? (*Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, aphorism 128)
- ❖ Am I a philosopher? — Who cares!.. (Nietzsche, closing line of a letter/CV to Georg Brandes, April 10, 1888)
- ❖ ...the disparity between the greatness of my task and the smallness of my contemporaries has found expression in the fact that I have been neither heard nor even so much as seen... (*Ecce Homo*, Foreword, section 1)
- ❖ Listen to me! I am thus and thus. Do not, above all, confound me with what I am not. (*Ecce Homo*, Foreword, section 1)
- ❖ I am, for example, absolutely not a bogey man, not a moral monster, - I am even an antithetical nature to the species of man hitherto honored as virtuous. Between ourselves, it seems to me that precisely this constitutes part of my pride. I am a disciple of the philosopher Dionysus, I prefer to be even a satyr rather than a saint... The last thing I would promise would be to improve mankind. I erect no new idols; let the old idols learn what it means to have legs of clay. To overthrow idols (my word for 'ideals') – that rather is my business. Reality has been deprived of its value, its veracity, to the same degree as an ideal world... The “true world” and the “apparent world” – in plain terms: the fabricated world and reality... The lie of the ideal has hitherto been the curse on reality, through it mankind itself has become mendacious and false down to its deepest instincts – to the point of worshipping the inverse values to those which alone could guarantee its prosperity, its future, the exalted right to a future.” (*Ecce Homo*, Foreword, section 2)
- ❖ 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? (*On the Genealogy of Morals*, Preface)
- ❖ The falseness of a judgment is to us not necessarily an objection to a judgment... The question is to what extent it is life advancing, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-breeding... without granting as true the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the purely invented world... without a continual falsification of the world... mankind could not live. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface)
- ❖ Man in himself, the absolute man, possesses neither dignity, nor rights, nor duties... The majority of men have no right to existence... (notes from *The Will To Power*)
- ❖ The problem I raise here is not what ought to succeed mankind in the sequence of species (the human being is a conclusion): but what type of human being one ought to breed, ought to will, as more valuable, more worthy of life, more certain of the future... (*The Antichrist*, section 3)
- ❖ All that exists is just and unjust and equally justified in both. (*Birth of Tragedy*, section 9, 1886)
- ❖ Art and nothing but art! It is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant of life. (*Will To Power*, section 853)

- ❖ A people is a detour of nature to get to six or seven great men – Yes: and then to get around them. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, section 126)
- ❖ That which partly necessity, partly chance has achieved here and there, the conditions for the production of a stronger type, we are now able to comprehend and consciously will: we are able to create the conditions under which such an elevation is possible...(*Will to Power*, note 898)
- ❖ Society should not exist for the sake of society but only as foundation and scaffolding upon which a select species of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and in general to a higher existence. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, section 258)
- ❖ I see them already coming, slowly, slowly; and perhaps I shall do something to speed their coming if I describe in advance under what vicissitudes, upon what paths, I see them coming? (*Human All Too Human*, Preface, section 2)
- ❖ A living thing desires above all to vent its strength – life as such is will to power. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, section 13)
- ❖ We can no longer conceal from ourselves what is expressed by all that willing which has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal: this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself – all this means – let us dare to grasp it – a will to nothingness, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life... (*On the Genealogy of Morals*, What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals? Section 28).

