

“Bad Boy Nietzsche!?”: The Literature of Alienation in the Late Writings: Ivan Soll on the Chapter Titles of *Ecce Homo*¹

Thomas Steinbuch

Ivan Soll's Nietzsche is an egoist who was always egotistical in his writings and only became more so in his later writings, especially in his autobiography *Ecce Homo*. For Professor Soll, and many others, Nietzsche was prone to self-delusion about his self-worth. Nietzsche was out of touch with the real world and his standing in it and stubbornly affected a false sense of superiority to it, compensating for his failures with the delusions we read about in *Ecce Homo*, with its self-promoting chapter titles. His view represents a wider reading. Daniel Breazele in his paper *Ecce Psycho* states that there is something “alarmingly unbalanced” about *Ecce Homo* and suggests Nietzsche had lost his grasp on reality (Breazeale 1991). *Pace* Professor Soll, the chapter titles are compositions, not compensatory egotistical outbursts. A rhetorical strategy is at work in the chapter titles, what Bertolt Brecht called the

¹ “Bad Boy Nietzsche!” is the title of a play about Nietzsche's madness by Richard Foreman, first performed at St. Mark's Church, New York, 2000.

verfremdungseffekt (the alienation or, distancing effect), and they are compositions. They are not helpfully read as the rhetoric of irony or either of its cousins, satire or sarcasm. More importantly, the chapter titles make reference to the empirical subject matter of the evolutionary development of life. Nietzsche's wisdom, the topic of chapter one and on which I shall focus, is knowledge of how to develop life in himself. His wisdom refers to a theory of evolutionary development. “I am wise in having the know-how of the development of life, in praxis and (up to a point) theoretically” to reconstruct, makes a statement that could be true or false. How did Nietzsche get this knowledge? I propose an epigenetic reading of Nietzsche's claim to have engaged “death in life” (to borrow the phrase from Tennyson that would seem apt) inherited from his father as a resistance, the overcoming which brought him to the “highest rung” on the ladder of life. It is likely that KL Nietzsche suffered trauma during the course of his deteriorating brain disease. Trauma-induced epigenetic alterations can be passed from traumatized individuals to subsequent generations of offspring (Youssef, Lockwood [...], Rutten). Nietzsche's statement of achieving the highest rung on the ladder of life signifies the reversal of epigenetic alterations, but obviously not just those that were *sui generis* in his epigenetic inheritance. My hypothesis is that there was an overlay in the epigene of KL Nietzsche of trauma from his brain disease, and likely also alterations from whatever underlying condition caused it, and a historically conserved profile of alterations associated with vengefulness and vindictiveness in our species, and that in dealing with the former Nietzsche was actually dealing with the latter and reversed the ancestral coding to mark an advance in our evolution. F Nietzsche engaged the conserved profile, not so KL Nietzsche. Of course, fathers with TB meningitis have children who do not claim a decisive role in advancing our evolution, so there must have been something unique about this inheritance situation, either in the underlying condition of the brain disease or unique in the trauma from the brain disease that introduced a new alteration in the species-level profile that F Nietzsche then came to inherit. My other main point is in regard to the criticism that Nietzsche's exceptionalist claims in *Ecce Homo* are self-delusions. I will draw attention to the use of the language

of illusion and reality in this charge and argue that this language is not following everyday or scientific use and produces nonsense statements. I will further argue the metaphilosophical point that a rejection of use for a class of expressions is driving the illusion/reality language in this criticism and speculate that it is because Nietzsche's project calls for autonomy in the development of life in ourselves that *Ecce Homo* has aroused this kind of antagonism.

Soll's claim is not just that Nietzsche was an egoist in *Ecce Homo* but that he was a refractory egoist.² Certainly we encounter people similar to whom Soll is characterizing Nietzsche as being in our trafficking with others, and it would seem that we should consider that this was Nietzsche's personality type as well. Nietzsche says that he never wanted anything to be different, that he never wanted "money, or women or honors," and even though he had these, his statement that he never had any desire for them is make-believe.³ We are cautioned by commentators not to naively take him at his word, that we should consider that he really did want these things just as do all others but did not get them and is now disprizing them as being "sour grapes." He deceives himself that he is indifferent, and then goes on to imagine that he has alternative and superior value predicates. At the head of these surely must stand his contrarian happiness that his inheritance of "death in life" was a good fortune because he made it the occasion to grow stronger in life, that he created *ein Mehr* of life in himself by the overcoming of it. His contrarian happiness is the subject of the riddle of his existence, which I propose to formulate as a riddle of identity: "whose happiness is death in life?"⁴ bringing it in line with the subject of identity in Oedipus, as Nietzsche calls

2 In a conversation with Professor Soll.

3 In EH, "Clever" 9.

4 In EH, "Wise" 2 Nietzsche tells us that his decadence was a stimulus to *Mehr-leben*, and in a variant to the epigraph to EH he writes that his books present *ein Mehr* of life that came from out his will to life „als Schöpfung, eine wirkliche Zuthat“, KSA 13: 23[14], p. 613f from line 26. Also, see the definition of happiness at AC 2 as "the feeling of becoming stronger, the feeling of resistance overcome." In the same variant to the epigraph he says that the "highest prize life can win is that it also opposes us with its highest opposition" („aber das ist die höchste Auszeichnung des Lebens, daß es uns auch seine höchste Gegnerschaft entgegenstellt“ 614, 1 7-8). Nietzsche

himself "the last Oedipus."⁵ Nietzsche's contrarian happiness contrasts with the contrived happiness of the *Gesindel* of the Motley Cow we read about in Z: "Prologue." These alternative value predicates are a self-delusion, so goes the critical reading, and by them Nietzsche is egotistical in compensating for the blow to his ego in failing to secure the things we all want. I take Soll to be saying that the claim to be a worthwhile self is falsified outside of a specific circumstance. Note that Muhammad Ali's "I must be the greatest", said after winning the heavyweight championship from Sonny Liston at 21 years of age, strikes us as quite different from Nietzsche's claim that "a new reckoning of time should begin with *Ecce Homo* as Year One", and that he "breaks the destiny of humanity into two."⁶ Ali is egotistical but it is not the same as the refractory egotism Soll imputes to Nietzsche. We feel that the autonomous self-ascriber is somehow unreliable: I cannot "just decide for myself" what the context of my value is and what my place is in that context indifferent to what the world around me has to say. The feeling of unreliability comes up because if we treat "trying to be" as real we are being naïve in allowing the self-ascriber to cheat in getting around winning by legitimate competition to get what he, just as we all, want, and the self-esteem that comes with it. By presenting the autonomous other as refractory in "trying to be" by illicit winning, the culture of competition justifies itself in power struggling against it, although the power struggle in competition is a proxy for a power struggle against autonomy which, because it is rejected, is not addressed directly. But is Soll just reporting the social reflex of competition as his criticism of Nietzsche? If so, it is not enough because it is really just folkish knowledge and does not rise to philosophical criticism. For this thought not to be just the social reflex it would have to contain an account

was opposed by the highest opposition of death in life. He won the highest prize of the happiness of resistance overcome. This is the solution to the riddle of his identity: the happiness of him who faces death in life is the happiness of the highest resistance overcome. This is also how he is a „Mensch des Verhängnisses“; letter to Georg Brandes, KSB 8: 1170, 500, December, 1888

5 WZ II, 49.

6 KSB 8: 1181 513f, letter to Heinrich Köselitz, December 9, 1888.

of what authentic indifference of this sort is. The idea is that Nietzsche has deceived himself into believing that he is indifferent to the value predications of competitive outcomes and that he is not authentically indifferent to them. But unless we can say what an authentic indifference is, we cannot say what the deception of authentic indifference is. Neither Soll nor any other critics make a survey of Nietzsche's texts to ask whether some expressions of this indifference are authentic and others not; in every case, his indifference is a self-deception. Maybe that was so, but we still need to know what a case of authentic indifference is to know that what Nietzsche thought was his authentic indifference was actually not it. But no such is ever put forward. The philosophical criticism just reproduces this social reflex of the culture of competition against this assertion of autonomy. Morris Lazerowitz wrote: "On the surface, the philosophers' talk is the talk of appearance and reality, but the fact is that he only pantomimes such talk. His use of language, whether mistaken or contrived, is not to describe either a phenomenon or the appearance of a phenomenon" (Lazerowitz 1980).

Nietzsche's critics have not approached Nietzsche's exceptionalist claims from the standpoint of their possibly being true empirical statements, but given what we now know about epigenetic science, organismal epigenetic inheritance and epigenetic evolution, there is an empirical context for reading them. Nietzsche is telling us that he is the first to have stepped out of the mass psychology of the Spirit of Revenge and advanced us forward on an ascending evolutionary pathway, and there is enough in place in the science of epigenetic evolution to read his claim to mean that he reversed gene regulation in the human epigenome. His self-overcoming was both overcoming of something *sui generis* in his inheritance from his father but also something far more than that.

Many sensed that Nietzsche was making a statement of empirical fact in his inheritance claims about his father in "Why I am So Wise", which is where the claim of exceptionalism to have created a new happiness for himself ultimately derives. Nietzsche states to his publisher that *Ecce Homo* first

puts matters in their right order of exposition, and I believe that it is this matter of his inheritance of "death in life" from his father that then became a resistance by the overcoming of which he developed life in himself to the highest rung that stands first in order of exposition of the meaning of his work.⁷

The values in the revaluation are the values of ascending life and they can be acquired only by individuals in that ascent path. These individuals, Nietzsche calls them „wertvollen Individuen“ in his notebooks,⁸ are autonomous self-ascribers of value predicates based on their commitment to the ascent of life above the decline of life. Autonomy is the presumption of Nietzsche's project. I believe that the social reflex against autonomy in ascribing value predicates to oneself has emerged in philosophy as nihilistic criticism of Nietzsche. The starting point for the domineering mind is fear of self-direction, fear of being born, and it seeks domination of an Other to become as if a second womb. Self-direction shuts out the domineering mind

7 Nietzsche wrote to his publisher Naumann that with the advent of *Ecce Homo*, the poor reception faced by *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* will be averted in the publication of *Ecce Homo + The Antichrist* because *Ecce Homo* will be "in the highest sense preparatory" to *The Antichrist*, and states that, in every sense, it is a long preface to *The Revaluation of All Values*. Now "everything will be in order," he says, implying that because the introductory material *Ecce Homo* had been lacking, order of exposition had not been followed and that was the problem that led to failure of *Zarathustra* with the public. *KSB* 8: 1139 463f to Constantin Georg Naumann, November 6, 1888. He repeats this point about EH and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* specifically in regard to his inheritance from his father in the last line of "Wise" 3 superseded draft. The issue of alterations in his epigenetic inheritance from his father is the key to how he came upon and followed out the project put forth in *Zarathustra*. See his letter to Georg Brandes where he wrote that *Ecce Homo* was the „Vorspiel der Umwerthung aller Werthe“, *KSB* 8: 1151 482f, November 20, 1888.

8 The phrase „einzelnen wertvollen Individuen“ appears at *KSA* 12 7[9]. Also, Nietzsche's Great Politics will be fought by a "formation of opposed individuals" *KSB* 8: 1170 500f to Georg Brandes, (*Entwurf*) early December, 1888; see also the entry "The Great Politics" *KSA* 13 25[1]. *Ecce Homo*, "Why I am a Destiny," section one implies his role as a *wertvollen Individuen*.

and is disprized. In the case at hand, authentic indifference to the value of being a winner or loser in competitive outcomes is disprized and is to be corrected as *per* those outcomes, told to follow only them. This opens up to the fantasy of the Other as loser, which is sustained in and by the competition, and the fantasy finds its way to believe itself sooner or later.

For Professor Soll, *Ecce Homo* is the climax of Nietzsche's campaign of self-promotion and tendency to self-praise. He alleges that that same tendency to self-praise is to be found earlier in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and so cannot be assigned to the onset of Nietzsche's madness, thus to keep pried open the door to Nietzsche's being culpable of an opprobrious egotism in *Ecce Homo*. Here is what Professor Soll wrote:

Nietzsche's tendency to self-promotion reaches a climax in EH (1888), his most sustained appraisal of himself. There he asks: "Who before me among philosophers was at all a psychologist?", and replies "There was before me no psychology." And he entitles some of his chapter headings "Why I am so Clever", [sic] "Why I am so Wise", "Why I write such Good Books", and "Why I am a Destiny". While there is certainly a strong element of irony in these titles, they are not meant just ironically. Nor can they be simply dismissed, as they have by some, as products of an immediately preceding mental breakdown. They are rather at the crest of a campaign of self-promotion that goes back at least to GM (1887), where he writes, "The project is to traverse with quite novel questions, and as though with

new eyes, the enormous distant and so well hidden land of morality ... and does this not mean virtually to discover this land for the first time?" (preface 7.) There are many indications of this tendency to self-praise even earlier in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885), (Soll 1999).⁹

Soll, and many other critics, read Nietzsche's statements of exceptionalism against the backdrop of his miserable life: his lack literary success – the poor reception of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* haunted him – his poor health, his itineracy traveling around from resort to resort, which were very nice places to live but to put such forward as real life makes us laugh at him as comically compensating for his failures, and so on. And in fact, Nietzsche was in a position of vulnerability since leaving Basel and remained so for the rest of his life, never afterwards getting on his feet. Soll's position is that Nietzsche's insistence on a sense of self-worth despite these losing outcomes instead of as seeing himself as being *manqué* to the degree that they would seem to imply makes him a refractory egotist. It is clear that Nietzsche is making an ethos appeal in *Ecce Homo* to be in the forefront of leading us in the revaluation of all values and that by saying that he never wanted anything to be different he is identifying himself as the opposite of "a person of *ressentiment*" who seeks to hurt and cripple life in revenge for the bad things that have happened to him in the past. The emphasis is not on the face saving "I never wanted money, women or honors" but on not wanting things to be different even such things as one might well think he *would* want to be different. My view is that Nietzsche's claims of exceptionalism contain possibly true statements about epigenetic heritability and individual epigenetic evolutionary development. The statements "I created *ein Mehr* of life in myself, I reached life to the highest rung, I know the highest happiness" could say something true about his developmental evolution epigenetically as the reversal of alterna-

⁹ The order of the chapter titles of *Ecce Homo* is cited incorrectly in Professor Soll's paper.

tive regulation from the ancestral past. I suggest that his self-overcoming of alternative epigenetic regulation was engagement of a conserved profile coding our decline at the species level and that is responsible for resentment culture and the psychology of the Spirit of Revenge. We know that epigenetic regulation can be reversed by cognitive exercises, and we find Nietzsche doing just that in “Wise” 4 and “Wise” 5, and, note, both of these sections open with a reference to this father.¹⁰ The project of the *Revaluation* to set before us the heaviest demand is grounded in empirical statements made in *Ecce Homo* that we may consider today as possibly being true facts.

But given, as we can now propose, “Why I am So Wise” makes truth apt empirical statements about epigenetic inherence and epigenetic evolution, it becomes a puzzle that their empirical character has been so long unrecognized by philosophers. But then, all of Nietzsche’s position statements in his major work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, are statements of fact. Nietzsche tells us that a terrible sickness of vengefulness against life has ravaged our species and that we are on a declining path of life; that Christians have invented a psychology of the “good conscience” by which they deceive themselves into believing that the hurt and crippling to life that they themselves cause by their vengefulness is due not to themselves but to the metaphysical agency of deserved punishment effected by the pastness of the past; that willing the eternal recurrence of the past will counter the falsification of the “good conscience” by eliding pastness and making it contemporaneous with the present so that we can admit into consciousness that we are ourselves the ground of hurt and crippling to life; that our several achievements of self-overcoming of our individual vengefulness will consolidate into *Eins Dichte* to become the Overhuman – all from Z: 2 “On Redemption” – are empirical statements. This point speaks to the issue of Nietzsche’s indebtedness to philosophers of the past: to what philosophical tradition belongs such empirical disclo-

¹⁰ In “Wise” 4 by remaining unprepared, and in “Wise” 5 by blaming himself for the wrongdoing of another to him although in fact innocent.

ures as above about the adversarial relation to life we carry as a species – they are systematic and far from being asides – and to what philosopher is Nietzsche indebted in opening the way to actual evolution out of it, as he realized that development in himself? Nietzsche says in *Ecce Homo* that who he had become at that point speaks with lightning bolts.¹¹ Unknown to ourselves and asleep under numbing epigenetic effects, Nietzsche’s *Mehr* of life was as lightning out of the dark cloud of humankind. Laurence Lampert has written recently that Nietzsche should be the model of what a philosopher should be (Lampert 2017). But how is this philosophy? In ways, Philosophy was nihilistic movement for Nietzsche.

We have become *lebensfeindlich*, revengeful against life, and by our revengefulness, we are hurting and crippling life in our species. The answer how we got this way must lie in the epigenetic evolution of culture. Peter Ward has recently drawn attention to the correlation between the near extinction events we have passed through and explosive cultural development (Ward 2018). From the fossil record we see rapid emergences of new species in the aftermaths of cataclysms, and here the epigenetic or “neo-Lamarckian” model of evolution seems most apt, while in stable geophysical periods we see gradual transitions to new forms, and here the Darwinian model is apt. Both are happening at the same time, but dramatic epigenetic evolution following environmental catastrophes seems to drive major cultural shifts in new behaviors and new kinds of intelligences. Ward cites the coincidence of migration out of Africa with the eruption of Mount Toba, and the development of cave painting with the Ice Age. To these I would add the coinciding of the rise of agricultural civilization in the Middle East with the Younger Dryas cooling event, which could have been set off by a comet impact. I suggest that the culture of the Spirit of Revenge evolved in us starting with trauma encoded as an epigenetic effect in the aftermath of ances-

¹¹ In EH “Books” *Untimely Essays*, he says that his becoming is inscribed in *Schopenhauer as Educator* and that who he has become now speaks with lightning bolts. In two of the plans drafted for the *Revaluation* appears the volume title: “Critique of Philosophy as a Nihilistic Movement” *KSA* 13 19[8] and *KSA* 13 22[14].

tral cataclysm(s) and possibly is traceable to the same event as caused the Younger Dryas cooling, as the religion of Abraham originated in Anatolia near the birthplace of agriculture in the West several thousand years later. Nietzsche's identification of a continuing *lebensfeindliche Tendenz* in our species can be seen to tell us that we are not outrunning the effects of these traumatic events and that the explosions in new kinds of intelligence and culture we see, such as the spiritualization of revenge in Christianity, associate to conserved alternative regulation from environmental traumas. It is hard to see why we would need all the new modifications if the trauma were not being conserved in the alterations, driving them. Not all in the population would be affected equally and there would be no effect in refugia. Ward does not suggest this but the emended scenario would seem possible and fits with Nietzsche's thinking.

The chapter titles of *Ecce Homo* are literary compositions. Soll nods in the direction of reading the titles as literary compositions when he says that they have an element of irony (but reads them to say what they would *prima facie* say otherwise.) What is ironic about the title of chapter one? "How ironic that I, Nietzsche, would end up wise after all?" or, "Here is my so-called wisdom." What does that mean? If we look into Nietzsche's background concerns we find that he would have been very careful about being ironic in a chapter given the title: "Why I am So Wise" lest he be confused with Socrates. As readers of *Twilight of the Idols* know, in the chapter "The Problem of Socrates", Nietzsche was no admirer of Socratic irony, analyzing it as being Socrates's personal act of resentment against the nobility of Athens. If anything, what Nietzsche is showing us in *Ecce Homo* is that he is not "a person of *ressentiment*." This is a problem for making this rhetorical classification. Neither can the rhetoric of the chapter titles be counted as one of irony's close cousins, satire, as Nicholas More states (More 2014), or sarcasm. *Pace* Professor More, if the chapter title "Why I am So Wise" is satire then there can be no positive idea of a wisdom in it. But Nietzsche's wisdom of how to overcome his "ill will" in "Wise" 4 lines up with overcoming the ill will in Z: 1 "On Redemption," and his wisdom of how to overcome feelings

and thoughts of retaliation for a wrongdoing whilst in the right in "Wise" 5 lines up with overcoming them in Z: 1 "The Adder's Bite." One is taxed to read these chapters as satire all and only, and we knew before More's book that some chapters contain satire. "Wise" 4 and "Wise" 5 are not satires of failed attempts of what philosophers have so called their wisdom. And, reading "Why I am So Wise" as sarcasm makes Zarathustra's critical distinction between himself and the famous wise men a moot point. As a real point was available, why use sarcasm? We have to look outside the irony, satire and sarcasm family for the rhetoric of *Ecce Homo*.

I will limit my scope to the reading of the title of Chapter 1, "Why I am So Wise," but I am prepared to argue that the literary analysis to follow can be applied to the other three chapter titles as well. The literary form of the chapter titles is, broadly, what Bertolt Brecht called the *verfremdungseffekt*, the alienation effect, or the distancing or estrangement effect. The idea behind the rhetoric of estrangement is to block the audience member from identification with the speaker (the speaker's *persona*) in order to be thrown back on her or himself to reflect on what is being said as applies to him, rather than being taken out of himself by the narrative to identify with the speaker. It is "playing in such a way that the audience is hindered from simply identifying itself with the characters in the play" (Brecht 1936). The literature of alienation is the original literature of Philosophy. In its use by Socrates, he is alienating the audience from identification with himself by showing them that he is not in possession of the truth so that they will reflect on their own case to find it. The idea is that they will recover the forgotten truth by recollection. Because forgetfulness lies between knowing and not knowing, there is a point to addressing others with the rhetoric of alienation. If the audience cannot in principle come into the truth, the rhetoric of alienation has no point and does not have an audience and is merely a denunciation of those present. Nietzsche's literature of estrangement too

is meant to throw its audience back upon itself to reflect on its falsification of its own agency in the hurt and crippling of life. They have repressed this falsification and the literature of alienation is meant to enable the truth to come to consciousness. Like forgetfulness, repressed thought lies between knowing and not knowing.

In fact, two audiences would seem to be addressed in how Nietzsche is using the literature of estrangement. There is the first-tier audience that is alienated and thrown back upon itself, as we have said, the person of *ressentiment*, but there is also a second-tier audience of us as individuals who may be hoped to step out of revenge socialization, or have already done so. We see this two-tier structure in the subtitle of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which he presents as “a book for all and none:” it is for none because it is composed as the literature of estrangement: “is there no place for me in this book?” – and we are to presume that there is not, but it also for all in that all should take the required step in the direction of Zarathustra’s program. “All” is a second-tier audience that the work is trying to bring into existence. Nietzsche developed an idea of a type of human being *en route* to the Overhuman: they are the “*wertvollen Individuen*.” We find the idea in his late correspondence. Clearly, Nietzsche considers himself to be such a one. Nietzsche is not criticizing the mass mind of the person of *ressentiment* on the grounds of a metaphysics of there being something “wrong” about being mass *per se* – and, to complete this (mis)thought, something “right” about being an individual *per se*. The concepts here are empirical, not philosophical. The mass man is “mass” by reason of her or his mass psychology of socialization into the Spirit of Revenge by means of which he believes that the past’s pastness is the ground of hurt and crippling to life, whereas in fact, he, or she, is himself the ground. The person of *ressentiment* has taken to vengefully hurting life on account of having to live with the untoward past, but he deludes himself about it and fastens on the past’s pastness as a disburser of punishment because he cannot change it, and imagines that his hurt and crippling of life is his just punishment. But his hurt and crippling of life is his own act of revenge; by imagining that he is being punished by

the past’s pastness he creates a “good conscience” for himself that thus avoids accountability and allows him to go right on doing it. This is Nietzsche’s empirical study of the evolutionary psychology of declining life in Z: 2 “On Redemption.” The *wertvollen Individuen* lift the repression of this falsification by willing the eternal recurrence. The idea that the past’s pastness is ordaining a punishment by locking off change to what is can only take form, obviously, in conjunction with the thought that something that is not, some past that is not, contains my good. We elide that imagined alternative past by willing the recurrence of what was: there is no place left for the imagination of the ill will to construct an alternative past. The pastness of the past becomes meaningless and I am disabused of the false belief that pastness’s punishment is the cause of my suffering of hurt and crippling of life, allowing me to face the fact that I am myself striking out to hurt and cripple life as revengeful. By stepping out of the mass socialization of the good conscience that I am deservedly punished by the past’s pastness, recognizing that that self-deception is just an excuse to go on with it, as now one of the *wertvollen Individuen*, take a step in advancing the development of life in our species. This is the audience Nietzsche intends to bring into existence by his literature of alienation.

There are many texts available to consult for the study of the rhetoric of the chapter title “Why I am So Wise” in a context, and we are surely right to question the value of any reading that goes on ahead without reviewing them. The same point can be made for the next title: “Why I am So Clever,” („*Warum ich So Klug Bin*”)¹² and for “Why I Write Such Good Books” one

12 An early variant subtitle for *Ecce Homo* was „*Ecce Homo, oder ein Psychologen Problem: Warum ich einge mehr weiss*.“ In the manuscript, the words „*Ein Psychologen Problem*“ are crossed out, (KSA 14: 465, footnote). The subtitle: “Why I Know a Few Things More,” survived to become part of the opening line of chapter 2, Why I am So Clever: “Why do I know few things more? Why am I so generally clever?” In his notes for various titles and subtitles for *Ecce Homo*, there is a paragraph titled “Greatest Cleverness” where he speaks of not permitting the magnitude of his task to enter consciousness too soon, and this is just what he offers in “Clever” 9 as the answer to the question: How One Becomes What One Is, the final subtitle for *Ecce Homo*, (KSA 13: [24] 2-9). The German „*klug*“ does not have the egotistical connotation of the English “clever” and no English translator of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* has translated the chapter „*Vom Menschen-*

might consult the important variant to the epigraph in which he speaks of his books as being “lived books”, and for “For Why I am a Destiny” his letter of Georg Brandes at *KSB* 8: 1170, 500f (*Entwurf*) is enlightening. For “Wise”, I will draw on Zarathustra’s “Prologue” in which Zarathustra faces the townspeople of Motley Cow, presenting a contrarian wisdom in his litany of his greatest love; two texts from *Zarathustra*, one from the chapter in Z: 2 “On Famous Wise Men” in which Zarathustra seeks to establish that the famous wise men are alienated from his wisdom because they are self-preserving, and another Z: 2 “On Self-Overcoming.”

Going beyond the development of the idea of wisdom in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to cite *Twilight of the Idols* again, in the chapter “The Problem of Socrates”, one should at least acknowledge in a discussion of the interpretation of wisdom in *Ecce Homo* that in that work Nietzsche made a rule against the possibility of wisdom about the value of life, such as he notes transgressed in Socrates’s negative judgment of its value in the *Apology* – that life is an illness and death is its cure – whereas he, Nietzsche, as he tells us in EH “Wise” 1, is distinguished by his impartiality in relation to the question of the value of life. Was neutrality in regard to the question of the value of life the wisdom about which Nietzsche was speaking in chapter one of *Ecce Homo*? One wonders then how he came by it, because, after all, we should ask, and he does say so, expecting that we would. It has to do with his inheritance from his father, and would seem to have a literal value.¹³ How is this just egotistical then? In “Wise” 6 Nietzsche tells us that he held onto intolerable living circumstances and friendships because it was better than feeling

Klugkeit“ Z: 2 as “On Human Cleverness” but rather as “On Human Prudence.” It would appear that “Why I am So Clever,” “Why I Know a Few Things More” and “How One Becomes What One Is” all refer to the explanation in *Ecce Homo*, “Clever” 9, which explanation must then be discoverable in all of these titles. In the course of that study, it becomes evident that the concept of cleverness involved is not the familiar egotistical one.

¹³ Sarah Kofman cites GM 3 § 12 in support of her reading of the neutrality statement in *Ecce Homo* (Kofman, 1992), p. 165.

them to be changeable because admitting the least feeling of changeableness led to revengefulness; and in a variant text to that line, it reads that doing so is “wiser” than feeling them to be changeable, his wisdom then being, as we may infer, knowledge of how to protect from decline of life.¹⁴ If Professor Soll consulted these texts, they would seem to have meant nothing to him.

Addressing the famous wise men, Zarathustra identifies Spirit as being “the life that cuts into itself, out of its own pain it itself adds its own knowledge („das eigne Wissen”)” Z: 2 “On Famous Wise Men.”¹⁵ *Contra* Darwin’s mechanistic theory of evolution, for Nietzsche, life sacrifices itself so that life-evolved, can appear – we hope. Life is spirited in being game enough to cut into itself to increase its knowledge, but knowledge of what and how do we get it? By life cutting into itself we add to our knowledge of how to develop life in ourselves. We are not on a pragmatic path when we are following the thread of the knowledge of development come of life cutting into itself but on contrarian pathways. Thus, Zarathustra uses the rhetoric of shame to instill a longing for the Overhuman in the townspeople: “[even] whoever is the wisest among you is still a discord between plant and spectre”, and this is because they are preserving themselves by their pragmatism.¹⁶ All of the aphorisms of Zarathustra’s greatest love in the *Prologue* state his contrarian Dionysian wisdom meant to evoke the hour of the great contempt and longing for the knowledge that will lead us towards the Overhuman. But the rhetoric of shame fails: “Give us this last man” clamors the crowd, “we have invented happiness.” But the Nietzsche of *Ecce Homo* shows us a contrary happiness by means of new knowledge. EH “Wise” 4 and “Wise” 5 each presents a cognitive exercise designed to enable mastery of vengeance and vindictiveness. In EH “Wise” 4 Nietzsche tells about the cognitive exercise of not forming expectations for the behavior of others to control

¹⁴ The variant to the passage of “Wise” 6 is at *KSA* 13, p. 618, l. 18.

¹⁵ My translation. We find this phrase also at Z: 3 “On Old and New Tablets” chapter 12, section 7, and we find the idea in Zarathustra’s aphorism that life “sacrifices itself for power” and that his will to life set him on “crooked paths” in Z: 2 “On Self-Overcoming.”

¹⁶ Z: 2 “On Famous Wise Men,” Graham Parkes translation.

himself from gesturing towards them with the ill will of disprizing constructions, such as being bearish or buffoonish, and in “Wise” 5 he tells how he blames himself for the wrongdoing of others to him whilst he is in the right to elide the wrongdoing from the world and so anything to be vengeful against, leaving no object for punishment. Knowledge such as not forming expectations for others and blaming oneself whilst in the right as controls on vengefulness is only discovered by letting oneself go and seeing where inclination leads in oneself and figuring out how to stop it. Nietzsche’s Dionysian Wisdom is the wisdom that the path of self-overcoming, the knowledge for it, leads through deliberate vulnerability. The major point of my critique of Professor Soll as regards the meaning of the title of chapter one is that it refers to truth apt statements about a knowledge of practice that develops life, a contrarian agenda, and one that calls for presentation in the rhetoric of alienation.

Nietzsche wrote in one of his notebooks that the creator-God of the world as he would have him be, stands for the Übermut Symbol, the principle of the Greatest Possible Stupidity. Here is the text from the *Nachlaß*:

(Dionysian Wisdom) The highest power to feel that everything imperfect and suffering as necessary (worthy of eternal repetition) as an effulgence of creative force, which must always and again shatter and choose the most prankish, most difficult paths. (Principle of the greatest possible stupidity, God as devil and symbol of prankishness (Übermuth-Symbol). *KSA* 11: 26[243]¹⁷

The divine will to power is hidden in the devilment of “fragment, riddle, and dreadful accident” in life as the resistances it seeks, the overcoming of which creates *ein Mehr* of life. So let us ask: “Herr Professor Nietzsche, what is this Dionysian wisdom you have to offer us? And the answer, as I take

17 Related is this aphorism from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: “And whoever has too much spirit might well grow foolishly fond of stupidity and folly itself,” Z: 4 “The Ass Festival.”

it to be, is: “My Dionysian wisdom is to choose paths of the most devilish difficulty, to pick the stupidest thing possible because there lies the path of the Overhuman. Will you join me in finding the wisdom of pathways of stupidity?” Far from alienating them, the famous wise men say what they know the people want to hear, but will the people pile into the cart Zarathustra is pulling with his contrarian wisdom?

Pace Professor Soll, we are not to believe that, after all, Nietzsche really did want money, women and honors just like everyone else, but failing in securing them, egotistically constructed his failures into a being a chosen pathway by following which, he further imagined, he was developing life in himself on a non-Darwinian evolutionary track of creating *ein Mehr* of life in himself, reaching the highest rung on the ladder of life and discovering a new happiness. These were real.

I have suggested that the argument that vindicates Nietzsche’s authenticity comes from newly emerged discoveries in the science of epigenetic inheritance and epigenetic evolution. Nietzsche wrote to Overbeck that he inherited an ‘overall lack of life-force’ from his father.¹⁸ KL Nietzsche’s death at 36 years of age was likely the result of TB meningitis or swelling of the brain, although there are other possibilities; these are discussed in Daniel Blue’s micro-biography of Nietzsche’s first 24 years (Blue 2016). KL Nietzsche’s brain disease was not set off by a fall down a flight of steps, as there was none, although this scenario has been recently revived by Nicholas More, despite offering no new evidence to challenge the consensus opinion that the story of the fall was made up by Nietzsche’s family.¹⁹ Whether from

18 Letter to Overbeck, July 4, 1888, *KSB* 8: 1056 p. 348.

19 See Montinari’s note to *Ecce Homo*, “Why I am So Wise” line 14 (“*Mein...*”), in *KSA* volume 14, *Kommentar*, p. 471 that letters of Franziska Nietzsche prove the unsustainability of the “convenient fable” that KL Nietzsche’s illness began with a fall down a flight of steps. Also, Malcolm Brown reports that Elizabeth Nietzsche altered her brother’s autobiographical sketch of 1858 narrating the onset of his father’s sudden illness, inserting a line that it was caused by a fall down a flight of steps. The letter, without the forgery of course, can be found at *KGW* I.1 4[77]. Julian

TB meningitis or brain tumor, or whatever the cause, KL Nietzsche must have experienced trauma from his condition, and it could have affected his epigene and F Nietzsche could have inherited the alternative regulation by transgenerational inheritance. TB meningitis in particular develops slowly, and KL Nietzsche could have been experiencing trauma related to his deteriorating brain condition before Nietzsche's birth. F Nietzsche was 4 years and 10 months old at the time of his father's death. As Nessa Carey noted, although the majority of studies are on mothers and their offspring, the role of fathers in transgenerational inheritance is being increasingly recognized (Carey 2012). It is well within the state of the science to propose that Nietzsche's mood disorder of vengefulness and vindictiveness associated to inherited epigenetic alterations that originated with his father as *per* trauma due to his deteriorating brain condition. My more radical hypothesis is that the trauma, or trauma of the sort, KL Nietzsche experienced induced a furtherance of the alternative regulation from trauma induced in an ancestral population that lived through geo-physical calamity that he shared and that had an ongoing liability to it or to trauma of its sort. This was the epigenetic alteration that F Nietzsche inherited and his basal situation. But Nietzsche also says that his second track of inheritance brought him to the highest rung on the ladder of life. F Nietzsche engaged his inherited psychology of death in life in himself, as KL Nietzsche did not, but, what alone is relevant, by this engagement, he was reversing the species-level (but not universal) conserved profile associated with the culture of revenge against life.

Young's *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography* includes a complete translation from the *KGW* of the autobiographical sketch of 1858 on page 9. Brown further reports that it is unlikely that there was a fall down a flight of steps as it is not mentioned in reports of the time where one would expect to find it. Malcolm B. Brown, "Death of Nietzsche's Father" <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~fnchron/sidelights/KLdeath.html>. Web. 2003. Last accessed June 10, 2020. Despite this evidence to the contrary, Nicholas More presents the story of KL Nietzsche's fall down a flight of steps as fact in his *Nietzsche's Last Laugh: Ecce Homo as Satire*, p.70, and makes what is obviously a bad argument, that F Nietzsche's omission of it in *Ecce Homo* is evidence that it is an incomplete family autobiography and as being such, is a satire of the genre of family autobiography.

The revaluation has an empirical basis. In EH "Wise' 4 Nietzsche lists three cases in which he reversed death in life in himself to be on the path of *Mehrleben*, and in all three cases Christian *caritas* intruded and attempted to oppose his development. If my hypothesis is correct, in the intrusion of pity in these cases Nietzsche was encountering opposition to his evolutionary development out of an ancestral coding for a psychology of enmity against life whose etiology began as encoding of trauma from a possibly near extinction event. He concluded that pity is a decadent value, and it would seem that we can state it as a judgment fact from Nietzsche's report that pity is decadent in being the identification with trauma induced alternative regulation.

In a paper from later in his career on Freud and daydreaming, Morris Lazerowitz stated that the philosopher creates an intellectual illusion that he is telling us about the world, whilst, in fact, he is using the ontological idiom to recommend an emendation in the use of language. Lazerowitz's hypothesis was that the philosopher daydreams in the alternative language created by the emended usage to give expression to repressed unconscious ideas.²⁰ Nietzsche's critics seem not to be prepared to say what the authenticity is of a contrary happiness indifferent to winning and losing outcomes in a competition of which he has only the self-delusion of "trying to be" it. The critique of Nietzsche's indifference to winning outcomes in competition as being a self-deception of a refractory egotist "trying to be" something higher than he is from out of a false sense of superiority, and the criticism that his self-ascriptions of value were falsehoods, is grounded in the culture of unconscious fear of the freedom of life and domination of autonomy. This unconscious rejection can be seen in the criticism's usage of illusion/reality language that would elide a use for a class of expressions that assert autonomy of indifference, thereby to introduce social control. But Nietzsche's project calls for the rise of a culture of autonomy.

20 Op cit., Lazerowitz, "Philosophy and Daydreaming."

Professor Soll was writing before the contemporary research into epigenetics and perhaps he would change his position in its light, or perhaps he would reject my hypothesis as overly speculative. Refutation is not on my mind; I hope only to open up the discussion of some entrenched views about *Ecce Homo*. We are well to be concerned that demands to obey authority, which exist as mass psychology, will make their way into philosophical criticism of *Ecce Homo* in reaction to Nietzsche's claim to the autonomous role of individuals of value to lead us forward in the development of life in our species. I am concerned that a negative relation to life, fear of the freedom of life, is of a piece with the vengeful hatred of the will to power in life that Nietzsche diagnosed, and that enmity against the autonomy of the *wertvollen Individuen* in declaring their commitment to an ascending path of life will present itself as another obstacle preventing Nietzsche's evolutionary project from initializing. Nietzsche recognized Philosophy's nihilistic tendencies and it would seem liable to others he did not consider.

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KSA = Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bände*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter and Munich: dtv, 1980. Print. *Nietzsche Werke, Historisch-kritische Ausgabe on CD ROM*. Walter de Gruyter and IntelLex, 1994.

eKGW = *Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke und Briefe*. Edited by Paolo D'iorio. Paris: Nietzsche Source 2006, <http://www.nietzschesource.org>.

KSB = Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bände*. Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter and Munich: dtv, 1986.

WZ = *La volonté de puissance*, Texte établi par Friedrich Würzbach, traduit de l'allemand par Geneviève Bianquis, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1995.

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