derives from the fact that things are not, as we heard him insist earlier, "separate from each other, indivisible, each existing in and for itself."[26] To the contrary, "all things are knotted together so tightly," as Zarathustra suggests in a later speech, that any moment "draws after it all things that are to come."[27] It all hangs together. And if we can follow Zarathustra in experiencing the world as "perfect"—*vollkommen*, "complete"—we realize that "all things are chained together, entwined, in love," and that by learning to love our fate (*amor fati*) we can come to "love the world."[28] We can indeed—beginning by becoming good neighbors to the nearest things.

Response

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Nature or History?

Franco raises one of the furthest-reaching questions about my approach to Nietzsche, regarding the relationship between nature and history. Franco notes that whereas "Nietzsche always approached psychology historically. . . [Fortier] seems to naturalize what Nietzsche historicizes," by presenting "as natural certain psychic needs—such as the religious longing for redemption—that Nietzsche considers to be historically constructed." I agree that for Nietzsche certain psychic needs, including the longing for redemption, are in key respects historically constructed (cf. 92–93), so I think the difference between Franco and myself concerns the weight of history in Nietzsche's analysis. On my reading, to say that a psychic need is "historically constructed" is to say that it is shaped or intensified by history, but there remains an enduring framework of human nature within

I am grateful to Rebecca Bamford, Paul Franco, Rebecca Ploof, and Graham Parkes for their insightful comments on *The Challenge of Nietzsche*, and for their insights into Nietzsche more generally. I have learned from each of them, although in the comments that follow, I concentrate on some of our differences.

[26]*WS*, §11, 16
[27]*TSZ*, "On the Vision and the Riddle."
[28]*TSZ*, "The Drunken Song," §10.

which those changes occur (27). This means that over the course of history certain problems will present themselves in different forms, and require different responses, but we still need to recognize that historical changes conceal crucial continuities.[29]

To take two examples: according to Nietzsche, would-be philosophers always, *necessarily*, begin by overestimating their independence—although, in one historical context this tendency will make them too friendly to ascetic ideals, while in another it will make them too dismissive of those same ideals (36–38). The longing for redemption is another case in point, since it amounts to a particularly radical form of hope that one's frustrated desires might still be satisfied—but the desires themselves (for the requital of one's love, for recompense for one's suffering, for the power to impose one's will on the world) are distinct from, and more primal than, that particularly radical form of hopefulness (95–96, 102–3, 198n86). So while Nietzsche's approach to psychology requires studying history, it also teaches us something about our nature.[30] And philosophy, in particular, involves appreciating transhistorical features of human life. For it is in light of continuities in the human situation that Nietzsche can recommend both Socrates and Montaigne as "guide[s] to morals and reason,"[31] and when Nietzsche claims to be superior to his philosophic predecessors, that is in part because he claims to have more accurately interpreted an enduring core of common experiences (e.g., the proper relationship between one's "health" and "illness").[32]

The Free Spirit or Zarathustra?

Franco broaches the matter of history in a different respect when he proposes that Nietzsche's two major character types, the free spirit and Zarathustra, are not competing alternatives so much as sequential stages within a grand historical narrative (the free spirit inaugurates a move away from Christianity that is completed by Zarathustra). Here again I do not entirely disagree, but I would qualify Franco's point as follows: Nietzsche's artful writings stage a historical drama, within which the free spirits are an opening act to warm up the audience for the star of the show, Zarathustra (116); but Nietzsche also lets us look behind the scenes, to see how much the creator-artist shared with his creations (159). In other words, "Mr. Nietzsche," as

[29]See Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, §18, and consider the Foreword to *Twilight of the Idols* (where Nietzsche says that he aims to sound out "*eternal* idols").

[30]With regard to Nietzsche's genealogical method, this point has been made by Thomas Meredith, "The Radical Goals of Slave Morality in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality*," *Review of Politics* 82, no. 2 (2020): 262–64.

[31]Nietzsche, *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, §86.

[32]See Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §372, and consider the comparison suggested by Robert Miner, *Nietzsche and Montaigne* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 276–77.

the self-styled narrator of his writings, is participating in a drama that is related to, yet distinct from, that of his characters. So in order to take the full measure of the free spirit and Zarathustra, we cannot look only at the role they perform in Nietzsche's grand historical narrative; we also have to look at the role those characters served in the history of Nietzsche's personal development.

Recent scholarship has been giving greater attention to the relationship between Nietzsche and his characters. For instance, Marco Brusotti has argued that the development of the free spirit ideal is an extension of Nietzsche's autobiographical development.[33] And Heinrich Meier has argued that Nietzsche understood his own example to be superior to that of his character Zarathustra,[34] while Paul Loeb has argued for the opposite conclusion.[35] Like these scholars, I am interested in how much Nietzsche identified with his characters, only I do not claim to pin down Nietzsche's final position on this question, so much as clarify the challenges that are entailed (for both Nietzsche and his readers) in attempting to live up to the distinct ideals represented by Zarathustra or the free spirit.

Bamford highlights a dimension of the free spirit ideal that is somewhat downplayed by my account, namely, the ways in which that ideal was designed to generate "fresh developmental possibility for humanity." Relatedly, she notes that in Nietzsche's later writings the "free spirit" matures into a "*very* free spirit" who prepares the ground for "philosophers of the future" that are capable of commanding and legislating values.[36] Bamford's point is valid and well taken: the free spirit is meant to help readers envision new horizons, along with discrediting old ones. But even once that point is acknowledged I think one still has to ask: To what extent should we accept "philosophers of the future" as an appropriate fulfillment of the original free spirit ideal, rather than a deviation from it? After all, envisioning the possibility of new horizons is different from creating them, and the latter project has to confront a distinct set of challenges.[37]

Thus, while Nietzsche was certainly interested in moving beyond critical debunking toward world-shaping value legislation, he knew that many free

[33]Marco Brusotti, "Nietzsche and 'Natural History': Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* on the Free Spirit," in *Nietzsche's Metaphilosophy*, ed. Paul S. Loeb and Matthew Meyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 9–10.

[34]Heinrich Meier, *What Is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?*, trans. Justin Gottschalk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021) and Meier, *Nietzsches Vermächtnis* (Munich: Beck, 2019).

[35]Paul Loeb, *The Death of Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 212–13, and Loeb, "Ecce Superhomo: How Zarathustra Became What Nietzsche Was Not," in *Nietzsche's "Ecce Homo,"* ed. Duncan Large and Nicholas Martin (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020).

[36]See Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §44, 211.

[37]See Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, §47.

spirits would be more inclined to remain solitary,[38] and he shows us that a character with the opposite inclination—Zarathustra—still winds up struggling intensely with whether value legislating is as satisfying an activity as he had initially assumed (114, 122). Nietzsche recognized that attempts at establishing new horizons would eventually invite new forms criticism (121, 159),[39] and he was not content to wait for future critics: he became his own critic, through his late autobiographical writings (149–52). So it seems to me that Nietzsche leaves us with challenges to confront more than with solutions to implement (15, 163). I therefore conclude that the necessity of discrediting old horizons and imagining new ones (i.e., the project of a free spirit) ends up being more clearly feasible than actually creating new horizons (i.e., the project of Zarathustra or a "philosopher of the future"). For although Nietzsche *calls for* the emergence of philosophic commanders and legislators, he knew that they might fail to emerge, and he therefore sought to justify his efforts as a writer in terms of their contribution to his personal development, rather than their impact on the wider world (146–47).

To Affirm the World or Change It?

This last claim brings me to one of the most fundamental questions of my study: Was Nietzsche concerned first and foremost with imposing his will on, and *changing*, the world—or was he more concerned with understanding, and *affirming*, the world for what it is? I conclude in favor of the second alternative (99–103), but Ploof suggests that there is no necessary dichotomy here: for her, we can understand and affirm the world in a way that makes us more effective agents of change within it. Thus, Ploof uses the metaphor of hearing to show that Nietzsche was interested in how to make oneself receptive to the world, rather than acting on it, but she characterizes this kind of receptivity as a "skill" to be "honed": so, for instance, although we cannot *demand* love from the world, we can make ourselves "open to and available for" the experience.

There are key statements in Nietzsche that support Ploof's suggestion (which also resonates with Alexander Nehamas's attractive reading of Nietzsche as a philosopher of self-fashioning).[40] Nevertheless, I am less certain than Ploof about how much cultivating one's receptive capacities

[38]Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §26; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "On the Famous Wise Men."

[39]For additional discussion of this point, see Sheridan Hough, *Nietzsche's Noontide Friend* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 97–100, 110, 138–42.

[40]For Nietzsche on learning to love, see *The Gay Science*, §334 and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "On the Spirit of Heaviness," §2. For a compelling recent defense of Nehamas's reading of Nietzsche that complements Ploof's argument, see R. Lanier Anderson and Rachel Cristy, "What Is 'the Meaning of Our Cheerfulness'? Philosophy as a Way of Life in Nietzsche and Montaigne," *European Journal of Philosophy* 25, no. 4 (2017): 1514–49.

can create "space for agency," because I would emphasize that making oneself "open to and available for" certain experiences falls short of determining what our experiences turn out to be.[41] On my reading, this last point is decisive, because Nietzsche wants us to realize that although facing our limitations is difficult, it does not have to be dispiriting: for it is only upon recognizing that in crucial respects we are not free to refashion ourselves that we can come to appreciate the primary value of affirming ourselves just as we are.[42] Nietzsche's retrospective self-assessments exemplify that process, by showing how his development as a thinker and human being was conditioned in ways that he never intended—and would not initially have even desired—by the exigencies of his health (138, 207n19). And I take this line of thought to support my earlier suggestion that, for Nietzsche, while we are very much products of history, we are even more deeply part of nature.

I cannot write about this last aspect of Nietzsche's thought as well as Parkes. But I am also not sure whether Nietzsche's view of the world can be assimilated to nature quite as much as Parkes suggests. Whereas, in my presentation, Nietzsche is very much focused on studying his individual human nature (hence his autobiographical inquiries), Parkes directs us to look more closely at our larger natural environment since, if we do so with the proper attentiveness, our sense of individual distinctness will be subsumed within that larger natural environment (to the point that "the ego, or 'I,' dies"). If so, then autobiographical inquiry must not be as important as I make it out to be, since what we need to learn most of all is not what is distinct about ourselves, but what we share with all that lies beyond our individual self.

It is not clear to me that Nietzsche believed our individual, idiosyncratic perspective could or should be left so completely behind. After all, nature is indifferent to human evaluative distinctions; Nietzsche is not.[43] So, I would ask Parkes: Doesn't learning to see ourselves as part of nature entail losing sight of the all-too-human world of "valuing" and "esteeming" that does not concern nature—but which Nietzsche characterizes as "the world of concern to us"?[44] Is this tension (between the world as viewed from nature, and the world of our all-too-human, everyday experience) one that we can really expect to transcend? Or is it, instead, a tension that we must learn to live with and affirm, if we are to love life for what it is?[45]

[41]For a similar qualification of the reading of Nietzsche as a philosopher of self-fashioning, see Kaitlyn Creasy, *The Problem of Affective Nihilism in Nietzsche* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 157.

[42]On self-affirmation as Nietzsche's primary value, see John Richardson, *Nietzsche's Values* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 358–60.

[43]On nature's indifference, see *Beyond Good and Evil*, §9; on Nietzsche's point of view, see *Daybreak*, §103.

[44]Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §301; *Beyond Good and Evil*, §226.

[45]Consider the outlook of Goethe and Hafiz as characterized in *On the Genealogy of Morality* III 2 and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, "Wagner as an Apostle of Chastity," §2.