known world they no longer had their old guides, their regulating, unconscious, and infallible drives. (GM 2.16)

Now comes the crucial turn (another that anticipates a major element of psychoanalytic theory):

All instincts that do not discharge themselves toward the outside turn inward—this is what I call the internalization of the human being: thus it was that the human being first developed what later came to be called the “soul.” This entire inner world, originally as thin as if it were stretched between two membranes, extended and expanded and acquired depth, breadth, and height in proportion as outward discharge was inhibited.

The interiority of the soul developed then from the retroreflection of drives that were originally directed outward. This idea is amplified in a note from the Nachlass of the same year (1887):

Inwardness arises when powerful drives that have been denied outward discharge by the establishment of peace and society try to make themselves harmless by turning inward in concert with the imagination. The need for enmity, cruelty, revenge, violence turns back and “retreats”; covetousness and domination become a desire for knowledge; the power of dissimulation and lying is reflected in the artist; the drives are transformed into demons with whom one fights, and so on.

This last point is the crux: as drives are retroflected they are transformed through the medium of phantasy into persons—and in the case of so-called “negative” drives into “demons,” autonomous powers capable of standing in opposition to the I. By this time one might suppose that Nietzsche’s earlier hypothesis of a “person-creating/imagining” drive can be dropped—or else expanded to cover the entire field—insofar as any drive would now seem capable at some level of appearing as a person.

Archaic Casts and Psychical Regimes

In different hours, a man represents each of several of his ancestors, as if there were seven or eight of us rolled up in each man’s skin—seven or eight ancestors at least—and they constitute the variety of notes for that new piece of music which his life is.

Emerson, “Fate”

In previous chapters we saw how the drives can manifest themselves in images of natural phenomena—as raging torrents, burgeoning plants, ferocious animals, and so on; but it became clear from the last chapter that they also have a primary propensity to present themselves, through the medium of the imagination, as persons. The two principal drives discussed in Nietzsche’s early work are named after the divine persons of Apollo and Dionysus. The Dionysian drive dissolves the individual into a multiplicity by prompting entry into “other natures,” impelling the individual to identify with other persons—and, by extension, with humanity and nature as a whole. The Apollonian drive projects a sheen of phantasy over the abyss of sensation, resolving neural impulses into shining figures of the imagination—whether Olympian gods and goddesses or persons more closely associated with the dreamer’s own biography. While in his earlier thinking Nietzsche ascribed our inability to deal with the world impersonally to the constant operation of a “person-creating drive,” he later appears (after some vacillation on the issue of the personal) to understand all drives as being naturally self-personifying—at least up until the last year of his writing.

Not only does a drive project a world from one of numerous personal perspectives within the psyche, but the drives also tend thereby to project a play of persons. It is instructive to inquire into the patterns that inform this play. And just as the drives derive from the archaic past, so the associated persons will have genealogies extending back beyond the individual’s birth. A major medium through which such persons appear is the phenomenon of the dream. Insofar as Nietzsche entertains the idea of drama as a model for life and the actor as a paradigm for the human agent, one may expect to find theatrical images playing a part in ordering the multiplicity of the soul. But
there is another source of relevant imagery to be found in ancient Greek thought, which Nietzsche draws on and elaborates more fully: namely, Plato’s idea of the psyche as polis, as political community. While some commentators remark parallels between Nietzsche and Plato in passing, most have overlooked the insights to be gained from a careful comparison on the topic of the political organization of the inner community.  

Before embarking on the final phase of our inquiry, a more general remark concerning the implications of this theme is in order. Although the topic of the multiple self has important ramifications in a number of fields of philosophical inquiry, it has been generally ignored. Many problems in philosophy and their putative solutions rest upon an unquestioned conception of the unity of the self. Whether we understand ourselves as some kind of simple unity or as a complex multiplicity of persons or agents is less a theoretical question than an existential issue with far reaching psychological and ethical implications. If there are multiple knowers and agents in each person, the complexities of epistemological problems and questions of moral responsibility are intriguingly compounded.

In reengaging the (im)personal aspect of the drives in the final two sections of the chapter, we resume our examination of the images Nietzsche employs to characterize the operations of the psyche, at the most complex level of images of human community. It is at this last level that the problem of ordering the multiplicity of the soul is at its most pressing—and so may be most fruitfully examined.

Patterns Personal and Impersonal

_If I have described life as a flux of moods, I must now add, that there is that in us which changes not, and which ranks all sensations and states of mind... The question ever is, not, what you have done or forborne, but, at whose command you have done or forborne it._

Emerson, “Experience”

The idea of psychical multiplicity is naturally inhibited by belief in a single self—a belief that tends to be shaken, however, by experience of the world as constant flux. Indeed Nietzsche, like the Buddhists, sees the belief in the substantiality of the self, as well as in the substantiality of things other than the self, as a kind of defence against the insecurity engendered by a constantly changing world. The experience of the I as something unstable and in flux undermines faith in its unity, and the realization of a multiplicity in turn raises the question of how to organize the elements and events within.

One finds this issue treated with limpid clarity by Montaigne, with his notion of the “undulating I”—though he himself became such a remarkably well ordered individual that signs of his struggle to impose order on his inner multiplicity are hard to discern. The beginning of the essay “On Repentance,” which happens to mention most of the major themes of the present chapter, establishes the close connection between the flux of the world and the undulating self.

The world is but a perennial movement. All things in it are in constant motion... Stability itself is nothing but a more languid motion. I cannot keep my subject [myself] still. It goes along befuddled and staggering, with a natural drunkenness... I do not portray being: I portray passing... whether I am different myself, or whether I take hold of my subjects in different circumstances and aspects.

Nevertheless, in observing himself Montaigne is able to discern a pattern to the flux, which he talks about in the context of differentiating inner from outer, private from public standards.

Those of us especially who live a private life that is on display only to ourselves must have a pattern established within us by which to test our actions, and, according to this pattern, now put ourselves on the back, now punish ourselves. I have my own laws and court to judge me, and I address myself to them more than anywhere else.

The difficulty of being morally autonomous, in the literal sense of providing one’s own moral laws, is emphasized also through the metaphor of the image of actors and the theater.

_It is a rare life that remains well ordered in private. Any man can play his part in the side show and represent a worthy man on the boards; but to be disciplined within, in his own bosom, where all is permissible, where all is concealed—that’s the point._ (Essays, 3:2, 613)

The difference between seeming and being, between the mask and whatever is behind it, outward show and inner drama, will concern us later in the chapter.

For Montaigne, as for Nietzsche, there must be an ordering agency within the soul if one is to live well, and in this context he proposes the image of an “inner court”—an image we saw the latter use in connection with thinking in general rather than only moral judgment. Montaigne goes on to say more about this “ruling pattern”: “There is no one who, if he listens to himself, does not discover in himself a pattern all his own, a ruling pattern, which struggles against education and against the tempest of the passions that oppose it” (3:2, 615). Like the law Zarathustra imposes upon
himself, this ruling pattern is unique to the individual. Montaigne was a major precursor in the art so highly prized by Nietzsche of “listening with the third ear,” and this passage shows that the ruling pattern is something discovered—something naturally “given,” and like Nietzsche’s “granite of fate” in being resistant to education—even though the inclination to listen for it or the will to follow it may not be. In expressing gratitude that his own passions are in general not so strong as to make it difficult to follow his ruling pattern, Montaigne amplifies the political metaphor (along Platonic lines):  

I customarily do wholeheartedly whatever I do, and go my way all in one piece. I scarcely make a motion that is hidden and out of sight of my reason, and that is not guided by the consent of nearly all parts of me, without division, without internal sedition. (Essays, 3:2, 618)

The important division, for Montaigne, is that between inner and outer, private and public—a distinction that is more complicated in Nietzsche, as is also that between reason and other motive forces in the psyche. (We shall consider the political metaphor for these internal relations in the last section of this chapter.)

Montaigne inquires elsewhere, in the frame of the courtroom metaphor, into the relations between the will and a multiplicity of other forces—in a way that suggests that in his younger days he was not so immune to “internal sedition” after all. In “On the Power of the Imagination” he sketches a picture of the body that anticipates Nietzsche’s idea of it as “a social structure of many souls,” in a passage that sets out from a humorous reflection on the capricious behavior of the male organ.  

People are right to notice the unruly liberty of this member, obtruding so importunately when we have no use for it, and failing so importunately when we have the most use for it, and struggling for mastery so imperiously with our will, refusing with so much pride and obstinacy our solicitations, both mental and manual. (Essays, 1:21, 72)

Montaigne then moves to exonerate the penis from charges of insubordination, on the grounds that they have been trumped up by other organs of the body who are equally importunate in their own ways.  

For I ask you to think whether there is a single one of the parts of our body that does not often refuse its function to our will and exercise it against our will. They each have passions of their own which rouse them and put them to sleep without our leave.

Playing the part of the defense attorney, he pleads for leniency toward his client, citing numerous instances of willful behavior on the part of the facial muscles, heart, lungs, pulse, hair, skin, hand, tongue, stomach, bladder, and intestines—all of which are represented as what Nietzsche calls “underwills.”

Insofar as much of Nietzsche’s talk of psychical multiplicity is in terms of persons within the individual, one wants to ask who these persons really are—what it means to speak of them as persons, where they come from, and how it is that they are now there. For Nietzsche the soul is naturally the site of multiple figures of the imagination, particular images, all perspectives personal. Persons as images are not concepts or ideas, nor abstractions of any kind: one’s anger is not a person, nor one’s hunger, nor one’s intellect. An image-person has a visage, a particular face, and moreover a voice, so that one can be addressed by it and so engage in dialogue. The old crone from last night’s dream is a person, even though the dreamer has never encountered her in real life, as is the image of a writer one admires but has never met except in phantasy. Bizet’s Carmen is a person, fictional in nature, while Ariadne is a mythical person. A deceased father is a person, as an image that lives on in memory and dream, while a mother still living is a person in two senses: as a psychical image, with whom one engages in dialogue in imagination, and also as a person in her own right, leading an independent existence. The problem is that Nietzsche (like every man) cannot perceive his mother directly, without the mediation of the image of her that lives in his psyche. The way he experiences his actual, flesh-and-blood mother is conditioned by his inner image of her, which is in turn informed by experience of the real woman. And yet the core, as it were, of this image is older and impersonal—a figure of woman formed long before the individual’s birth. The same is true of any person with whom one has dealings in the real world: “We do the same when awake as in the dream: we first invent and create the person we are dealing with—and immediately forget that we have done so” (BGE 138).

The oscillation between inner and outer continues.  

Let us go back for a moment to Nietzsche’s ideas about the ways the past, where these persons seem to come from originally, enters into our present existence. In the essay on history he remarks on the tendency to dismiss the past, because of its burdensome nature, as mere appearance—as something not fully real.

The human being braces himself against the great and ever greater weight of the past: this presses him down or bends him sideways, weighing down his steps as an invisible and dark burden which he would like to deprecate as mere appearance [Schein]. (HL I)

What is past is not all foreign: part of recent history is our own personal history, the past that we ourselves have experienced directly and thereby
incorporated. The task of assimilation, made possible by the individual's "plastic power," and comprising pasts both personal and impersonal, is thus almost boundless:

For the most powerful and tremendous nature there would be no limit to the historical sense... it would draw to itself and take in the entire past, its own and the most foreign, and as it were transform it into blood.  

But the absorption of the past is also a source of conflict, a conflict similar to that described in "On Moods" between incoming experiences and older residents of the household of the soul. In the essay on history, Nietzsche presents a comparable "image of the mental processes taking place in the soul of the modern human being":

Historical knowledge streams in ceaselessly from inexhaustible wells, things strange and incoherent press in on us... and our nature strives to receive and arrange and honor these strange guests, but they are themselves in conflict with each other, and it seems necessary to constrain and master them if we are not ourselves to perish in the struggle. Habituation to such a disorderly, stormy, and conflict-ridden household gradually becomes second nature, though this second nature is unquestionably much weaker, more restless, and altogether unhealthier than the first. (HL 4)

The power of mastery sufficient to keep the guests from the past in order and the discernment necessary to maintain the balance between admitting the flow of the past and experiencing life in the present are a rare combination—which is why Nietzsche emphasizes that history can be borne "only by strong personalities" (HL 5). But even for ordinary mortals, the attainment of this kind of balance is an integral feature of a rich psychological life.

But let us first look "closer to home," in the personal prehistory of the individual, for the source of at least some of the voices that participate in a person's internal dialogue. An aphorism near the beginning of The Wanderer and His Shadow bears the title "Content of the Conscience."

The content of our conscience is everything that was regularly demanded of us without reason during our childhood, by persons whom we respected or feared... The faith in authorities is the source of conscience: it is thus not the voice of God in the human breast, but rather the voice of some other human beings in the human being. (WS 52)

Insofar as we encounter in the course of growing up a number of "persons whom we respect or fear," a variety of "authorities" (parents, teachers, dominant peers), one would expect the conscience to speak with many voices. This idea strongly prefigures Freud's ideas about the origins of conscience, which he imagines is constituted by the introjection of images of the parents above all. And indeed it may be helpful to take a brief look in this context at a relevant strain in psychoanalytical thinking about how the ego is formed.

Having no direct experience of fatherhood, except in relation to his books, Nietzsche has little to say about children; but if one looks to the psychoanalytical literature on the developmental formation of personality, one finds accounts couched in imagery that emphasizes the multiplicity of the psyche and is consonant with Nietzsche's ideas. The neonate is imagined to have no conception of the distinction between inner and outer, self and not-self. The boundary between self and world is constructed by a laborious process of introjection and projection, analogous to the physical activities of swallowing and disgorging, in which one takes in what one likes and spits out what is distasteful. The developing I clings to this mechanism of the primitive "oral" phase, insofar as identification with "role models" continues to take place by means of introjection, by incorporating the other person into the psyche. The most striking instance of this phenomenon occurs at the beginning of the formation of the "over-I" (Über-Ich), when the child introjects the parents (or parent-substitutes) in order to help resolve the Oedipus complex. Depth psychology in general sees the I not as something given, but rather as a construct (both Freud and Jung speak of the Ich-Komplex), something put together by the psyche in order to cope with the external world. The implication of these developmental accounts, which are based on a vast amount of experience of child analysis, is again that the self is in large part composed of others, that each person is in fact many persons.

An unpublished note (from the year The Wanderer and His Shadow appeared) shows that Nietzsche anticipated the psychoanalytical idea of introjection, though without using that exact term for the process. Especially significant is the mention of drives in this context:

"Our relation to ourselves!... We retroreflect all good and bad drives upon ourselves... we never treat ourselves as an individual but as a duality and multiplicity; we practice all social relations (friendship, revenge, envy) on ourselves... we are always among a multiplicity. We have split ourselves up and continue to do so... We have transposed "society" into ourselves, in miniature, and to retreat into oneself is thus no kind of flight from society, but an often painful dreaming-on [Forträtumen] and interpreting of our experiences on the schema of earlier experiences. We take into ourselves not only God but all beings that we recognize, even without the names: we are"
lung's notion of the cosmos, _insofar as we have conceived or dreamed it_. Olives and stones have become a part of us: the stock exchange and the newspaper as well.4

The whole of society—olives, stones, and all: this is an important sense in which “the soul is all things” for Nietzsche. (And the presence in there of the stock exchange and even the newspaper certainly explains the nausea that afflicts characters like Zarathustra.)

If all beings that we recognize are potential denizens of the soul, no wonder self-knowledge is such a long and laborious task. A slightly later aphorism begins by emphasizing the difficulty of “observing oneself” and living up to the maxim “Know yourself!” and goes on to encourage closer inquiry into “the voice of conscience”:

Your judgment “this is right” has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences, and lack of experience: you must ask “how did [this conscience] arise?” and then “what is really driving me to listen to it?” (JS 335)

Just as he had earlier advocated dealing with thoughts and ideas in a wide variety of personal modes, Nietzsche now recommends a corresponding range of attitudes to adopt toward the voices of conscience.

You can listen to its command like a good soldier who hears his officer's command. Or like a woman who loves the one who commands. Or like a flatterer and coward who is afraid of the commander. Or like someone stupid who obeys because no objection occurs to him. In short, you can listen to your conscience in a hundred ways,5

If we are to learn to listen in a hundred ways, would we not be hearing through as many pairs of ears? And might the commands we hear not issue from at least as many mouths?

For Freud the Über-Ich is formed by the superimposition, as it were, of the parental imago upon an original image or template (Urbild, archetypal), a prior pattern of the punishing parent that is inherited from generations of ancestors.6 Jung adopts a similar schema, with his idea of archetypes, images of persons—the mother, the old wise woman, the eternal youth—that are, paradoxically, the impersonal basis of the individual's personality. (Impersonal in the sense of collective images that antedate the individual's existence.) One finds in Nietzsche a similar archaic dimension to the persons that make up the society within each psyche. An aphorism entitled “From the Mother” anticipates Freud's idea of the “parental imago” as well as Jung's notion of “anima”:

Every man carries in him an image of woman derived from the mother: it is this image that determines whether he will revere women or disparage them or else be generally indifferent toward them.7

Later depth psychology makes explicit what is only implied here: namely, that the image of the personal mother is itself informed by aeons of experience of “woman.” It is clear from a later aphorism (couched in more assertive and less experimental terms than is characteristic of Nietzsche's psychological pronouncements) that the “image of woman” (strictly speaking: the physiological propensity to produce it) would be something inherited through many generations:

One cannot erase from a person's soul what his ancestors most liked to do and did most constantly... It is absolutely impossible that a person should _not_ have the qualities and preferences of his parents and ancestors in his body. (BGE 264)

Let us now examine one of the major grounds for this supposition of archaic inheritance and the idea that so much is “in the blood”: namely, the phenomenon of the dream.

Dreams and Archaic Inheritance

_I knew an ingenious honest man who complained to me that all his dreams were servile, and, that, though he was a gentleman by day, he was a drudge, a miser, and a footman, by night. Civil war in our atoms, mutiny of the sub-daemons not yet subdued._

—Emerson

Recall first the major role played by the dream in _The Birth of Tragedy_ where Apollo, just as he presided over “the beautiful sheen of the inner world of phantasy,” was also the patron of “the beautiful sheen of the dream worlds, in the generation of which every human being is fully an artist” (BT 1). Insofar as one is an artist in this respect, one’s creation is totally spontaneous, with no deliberate participation on the part of the conscious self. This is the beauty of the dream: that it naturally offers a picture of the psyche as a play of drives appearing spontaneously as persons. Nietzsche emphasizes the general inaccessibility of the drives to explicit awareness: with the business of conscious deliberation inhibited during sleep, the drives are able to manifest themselves more clearly. The difficulty is of course to see their play—or rather to bring to consciousness and retain in memory the drama in which one has played a part while asleep.

When attuned to one’s dreams and practiced in the art of recording them,
it is possible to retrieve several lengthy dreams per night; and if attention is paid to them over the long run, the amount of experience of the dream worlds that can accumulate over the years is considerable. Given this potential bulk (especially relative to what we remember from waking life), and in view of the artistically “beautiful sheen” of such experience, the mainstream of Western philosophy has evinced a distinct lack of interest in the phenomenon of the dream. While several thinkers of Romanticism were exceptions in this respect, one of the immediate inspirations for Nietzsche’s reflections on the dream surely came from the aphorisms of Lichtenberg.

With remarkable prescience, Lichtenberg emphasizes repeatedly the continuities and commonalities between waking and dreaming experience.

Again I commend dreams: we live and experience just as well in the dream as when awake and are the former just as much as the latter. One of the distinctions of human beings is that they dream and also know it. We have hardly made appropriate use of this phenomenon. The dream is a life that, together with the rest of our lives, constitutes what we call human life. Dreams merge gradually into our waking state, and it is impossible to say where a person’s waking experience actually begins.

Nietzsche is following Lichtenberg when he assimilates the operations involved in phantasy and in the dream (as discussed in the previous chapter), as is evidenced by this aphorism from Beyond Good and Evil (which follows the passage discussed earlier concerning our propensity to “phantasize approximations” of things):

“Whatever happened in the light goes on in the dark”: but also the other way round. What we experience in dreams, provided we experience it often, ultimately belongs as much to the total economy of our souls as anything “actually” experienced. . . . And even in the most serene moments of our waking spirit we are led a little by the habits of our dreams. (BGE 193)

It was earlier, in Human, All Too Human, that Nietzsche had opened up an archaic dimension to the phenomenon of dreaming. In his initial talk of “dream-thinking” and its similarity to so-called primitive modes of thought, his reconstruction of the experience of “the savage” is condescendingly hard-scientific (uncharacteristically so—and surely a function of his recent repudiation of the ideas of Wagner and Schopenhauer). Nevertheless, the basic idea is psychologically profound and experientially enriching. In an aphorism entitled “Dream and Culture,” he writes:

[In the dream] our memory . . . is taken back to a condition of imperfection such as may have been normal for everyone by day and in waking during the primeval ages of humanity. . . . We all resemble in our dreams the savage . . . in the bad inferences of which we are guilty in the dream. . . . The perfect clarity of all dream-images, which presupposes unconditional belief in their reality, reminds us again of conditions of earlier humanity, in which hallucination was extraordinarily common and moreover seized whole communities and entire peoples at one time. Thus, in sleep and in dream we recapitulate the entire curriculum of earlier humanity. (HA 12)

The next aphorism explains what is meant by “bad inferences.” Nietzsche details the manifold processes and events that impinge upon the organism—from within as well as from outside—during sleep, and suggests that the mind is thereby prompted to search for grounds for this manifold stimulation: “the dream is the seeking and imagining of causes for the feelings thus aroused” (HA 13). That this process is equivalent to the drives’ interpreting nerve stimuli is confirmed by subsequent talk of the role of “aroused phantasy.” Above all the process is, at its depths, an extremely conservative one.

In my opinion, just as nowadays people still infer in the dream, so human beings used to infer in waking too for thousands of years. . . . In the dream this primordial piece of humanity continues to operate in us, for it is the basis on which higher reason developed and continues to develop in every human being. The dream takes us back to remote conditions of human culture and gives us a means of understanding them better. Dream-thinking is so easy for us now because we have been so well drilled over vast stretches of human development in precisely this form of phantastic and easy explanation in terms of the first thing that strikes us. To this extent the dream is a form of recreation for the brain, which during the day has to satisfy the more stringent demands on thinking that are imposed by higher culture. (HA 13; second emphasis added)

Freud quotes part (and paraphrases part) of this passage with the highest approval in The Interpretation of Dreams (chap. 7c), and he continued for some time to entertain the idea of an “archaic inheritance” that manifests itself in the dream.

Nietzsche’s ideas on the dream were influenced to some extent by his acquaintance with ancient Greek attitudes toward dream experience—and indeed, his overall position is well summed up by the following elegant characterization by a classical scholar of the attitudes of the Greeks.

Man shares with a few other of the higher mammals the curious privilege of citizenship in two worlds. He enjoys in daily alternation two distinct kinds of experience . . . each of which has its own logic and...
its own limitations; and he has no obvious reason for thinking one of them more significant than the other. If the waking world has certain advantages of solidity and continuity, its social opportunities are terribly restricted. In it we meet, as a rule, only the neighbors, whereas the dream world offers the chance of intercourse however fugitive, with our distant friends, our dead, and our gods.16

Both the Homeric idea that dreams come to us from the underworld of Hades and its more shamanistic counterpart, according to which the soul travels in dreams to the underworld, inform much of Nietzsche's thinking about dream and phantasy. It is more than a poetic conceit, then, when he entitles the last aphorism of Assorted Opinions and Maxims "Descent into Hades."17

I too have been in the underworld, like Odysseus, and shall be there even more; and I have not only sacrificed rams to be able to talk to some of the dead, but have not spared my own blood as well. Four pairs have not refused themselves to me: Epicurus and Montaigne, Goethe and Spinoza, Plato and Rousseau, Pascal and Schopenhauer. I have had to engage these figures in the course of my long, solitary wanderings. . . . Whatever I say, resolve, and think through for myself and others, I look to these eight and see their eyes likewise fixed on me. (AOM 408)

Just as the shadowy images Odysseus encountered in the underworld were unable to speak until they had been given blood to drink, so the archaic images in the depths of the soul do not fully become persons, capable of conversing, until they have been animated by having psychical energy devoted to them. Several similar passages make it clear that during the self-imposed solitude of Nietzsche's last productive decade he was not alone—but rather enjoyed conversation, Machiavelli-style, with shades from the tradition in the underworld of dream and phantasy. Such activity conduces, through its direct relations with the dead, to a more lively conception of history as well as a deeper experience of life.

An aphorism entitled "Happiness of the Historian" begins with a piece of direct speech contrasting the world of the one who lives historically with that of the metaphysician. Nietzsche then appsends the comment:

This is what someone said to himself in the course of a walk in the morning sun: someone for whom in history not only the spirit but also the heart is constantly transforming itself anew, and who, by contrast with the metaphysician, is happy to harbor within him not "an immortal soul" but rather many mortal souls. (AOM 17)

On one level Nietzsche is referring here to the way the drives that constitute the psyche arise and perish, come together and diverge, in perpetual fluctuation, producing as they do so the variety of persons thanks to which we may become "researchers and experimenters."18 On another level is the underworld, ultimate home of mortal souls—but imagined as a psychological realm in the present and past, beneath every event, rather than an eschatological realm in the future.

Shades encountered in Hades are unable to communicate until given blood to drink, until after an infusion of vitalizing fluid. There is another sense in which the shades of the past reach us through blood, one suggested by Nietzsche's saying that the past can be transformed into blood by the "plastic power" of the human psyche.19 Our personal past does not need to be transformed into blood, since it is in a sense already precipitated there. But one of the major developments in Nietzsche's thinking between the Untimely Meditations and The Joyful Science consists in the increasing realization of how much more of the "foreign" past comes to us through "the blood." In an aphorism entitled "Ultimate Lesson of History," another voice conversant with historical inquiry and cognizant of the burden of the past says:

"The spirit of that bygone age would bear down upon you with the weight of a hundred atmospheres: what is good and beautiful in it you would not be able to enjoy, while you would be incapable of digesting what is bad in it." . . . And yet is everyone not able to withstand it in his own age? Yes, but only because the spirit of his age does not only lie upon him, but is also within him. (AOM 382)

We are able to withstand the enormous "external" pressure of the past (as manifested in the history of culture and institutions) because it is equalized, as it were, by the flow of the past into the contemporary psyche from within, by the past that we inherit "in the blood." A major contributor to the spirit of the age will then be the flow that was characterized in The Joyful Science as the continuous operation within us of "the entire primal age and past of all sentient being" (JS 54).

The notion has a distinctly Lamarckian tone to it, and indeed Nietzsche mentions Lamarck in The Joyful Science (99) as well as in some of the later notes. His espousal of the idea of the inheritance of acquired characteristics has prompted some commentators to dismiss the "archaism" in his thinking on the grounds that Lamarck's theories have been discredited. But quite apart from the fact that Lamarckian ideas have recently been regaining some credibility, these dismissals miss the point of Nietzsche's concern with the topic. His belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics stems from a salutary refusal to separate soul from body, or spirit from matter; but the important thing is to take remarks about things being "in the blood" in the experimental spirit in which they were meant. The point of Nietzsche's
The child of the third transformation signifies innocence and a new beginning, but it is only a beginning. The individual gains strength through assuming the burden of the traditional values of the culture. The next stage, in which the lion overcomes the great dragon with an overwhelming "No" to tradition is just as crucial: there has to be a complete break, so that the individual can realize its freedom. But the third stage ultimately involves a reappraisal of the appropriate elements of the tradition that has been rejected. The child of the third transformation signifies innocence and a new beginning, but it is only a beginning. The creativity symbolized by the child does not issue in a creation ex nihilo, but rather in a reconstrual of selected elements from the tradition into something uniquely original. The Dionysian child in Heraclitus plays on the eternal shore, destroying and reconstructing using the same materials.

The assumption of responsibility (not to mention the maintenance of psychical order) is a more difficult undertaking in the modern age, since the inherent multiplicity of drives is compounded by what is inherited from previous generations.

Human beings from an age of disintegration in which races are thrown together indiscriminately have the inheritance of multiple origins in their bodies, that is, opposite . . . drives and value standards that fight amongst themselves and seldom give each other peace. (BGE 200)

Such human beings will tend to be weaker than normal, and to long for "the war that they themselves are" to come to an end; they will suffer from a case of "bad multiplicity." But there is also a brighter side to this phenomenon.

But if the conflict and war in such natures works as additional incentives and stimuli to life, and if true mastery and refinement in waging war with themselves—self-mastery and self-outwitting—has been inherited and bred along with these powerful and irreconcilable drives . . . then enigmatic human beings will arise that are destined for victory and seduction.22

There is a larger element of risk for modern individuals to open up to the full flow of the past, but the rewards are correspondingly greater. In this context, then, one should read the "far" in the following passage as referring to temporal as well as spatial reach, as a measure of an individual's capacity for responsive assimilation of present and past ages.

A philosopher . . . would be compelled to find the greatness of man . . . precisely in his comprehensiveness and multifacetedness, in his wholeness in multiplicity: he would even determine worth and rank by how much and how many kinds of things a person could carry and take upon himself, by how far he could extend his responsibility. (BGE 212)

Nietzsche again sounds the theme of multiplicity and the special dangers it poses in the modern age, and especially in Europe, owing to the vast complexity of its inheritance. The need for the "plastic power" discussed in the essay on history becomes more pressing than ever:

The past of every form and mode of life, of cultures which earlier lay right next to or on top of each other, now streams . . . into us 'modern souls,' our instincts now run back everywhere, we are ourselves a kind of chaos . . . Through our semibarbarism in body and desires we have secret access in all directions, such as no noble age has possessed, above all access to the labyrinth of unfinished cultures and to every semi-barbarism that has ever existed on earth. (BGE 224)

While such a situation may provide opportunities for great creativity, the vast array of possibilities may simply overwhelm and bewilder. The potential for greatness in the modern age is tremendous—though it is precisely the tremendous instinctual confusion informing (or deforming) the age that enervates it, making it the most decadent of times and thereby diminishing the possibility of a human being's achieving greatness.23
But before engaging the problem of how greatness might be achieved through mastering the instinctual chaos and ordering the persons in the inner community, let us approach the question of the nature of these persons from another direction. Taking as a cue the roots of our word “person” in the Latin persona, let us see if we can gain insight into the persons inhabiting the Nietzschean psyche by way of the image—crucial to his psychology in general—of the mask, which is in turn set in the context of the metaphors of world as theater and life as drama.

Plays of Masks

If you could look with [the cat’s] eyes, you might see her surrounded with hundreds of figures performing complex dramas, with tragic and comic issues, long conversations, many characters, many ups and downs of fate.

Emerson, “Experience”

Like many children, Nietzsche had been a keen amateur playwright and director of dramas in the home and at the homes of his friends. His enthusiasm for the theater persisted and was finally afforded sophisticated opportunities for satisfaction—in the role of audience rather than producer—during his student years in Bonn and Leipzig. Leipzig in particular was a city of culture with a variety of talented musicians, actors, and opera singers in residence and passing through, and the young student’s major indulgence was frequent visits to concerts and the theater. Nietzsche enjoyed infatuations with a number of famous singers and actresses, mooning over their photographs and dedicating songs to them. In a letter of 1866 to the actress Hedwig Raabe (not known to have been actually sent), the twenty-one-year-old student writes modestly of the “few songs” he is presenting to her: “My first wish is that the insignificant dedication of these insignificant songs does not signify the wrong thing to you. Nothing is farther from my intentions than to wish by this dedication to draw attention to my own person.” He is writing out of gratitude to her for bringing to life the characters she portrayed in plays of endless diversity and so performs the most colorful and baroque play to you alone, and thus I hope you will not take the liberty of this letter amiss.

This radiant feminine figure, “the blonde angel,” whom Nietzsche was too shy to meet in person though she lived not far away with relatives of his, and with whom he was—according to Elisabeth—“totally in love,” was a medium for parts of his own personality, psychical figures that he would indeed encounter again in the course of his life. Famous though Fräulein Raabe was—perhaps because of her celebrity—Nietzsche had no desire to meet her: what fascinated was the personae of the drama, the figures played by the actress who, in person and out of character, would be bound to disappoint.

When he returned to Leipzig in 1868 after a brief period of military service (cut short by injuries sustained through a slip while mounting his horse), Nietzsche embarked upon the most socially extraverted period of his life, characterized by frequent attendance at opera and theater—even though he was also working hard at his philology studies. Through a friend, he had found lodgings in the house of a Professor Biedermann, editor of the Deutsche Allgemeine, Leipzig’s foremost newspaper. He participated in the rich social and cultural life in the Biedermann home, which was (in spite of the name) a cosmopolitan gathering place for a variety of artistes and denizens of the beau monde. There he came to know personally an actress with whom he and Rohde had been infatuated two years earlier, the ravishingly sentimental Susanne Klemm. While he speaks of seeing her home after evenings chez Biedermann as “a pleasant duty,” personal acquaintance (often an attenuator of projections) apparently led to the cooling of his former ardor. Through his connections with the newspaper, Nietzsche was able to attend numerous concerts and plays in a semiofficial capacity, and his expertise in music brought him the offer of the position of opera critic. In spite of his growing enthusiasm for opera—it was at this time that he was first overwhelmed by performances of the overtures to Tristan and Die Meistersinger—he declined, no doubt out of respect for the formidable writing commitments for his degree in philology.

It was in November of 1868 that Nietzsche was first introduced to Wagner, whose love for and understanding of the theater—not to mention the extreme theatricality of his personal life—made an enormous impression on the younger man. His interest in Attic tragedy in particular was fueled by contact with the Master, whose enthusiasm for Schopenhauer had opened up the possibility of seeing (and living) life as drama and of entertaining a tragic view of life. For Schopenhauer, theater was a major metaphor for the activity of the will, which “portrays itself in a million figures of endless diversity and so performs the most colorful and baroque play
without beginning or end, and which hides itself so thoroughly behind all of these masks that it fails to recognize itself and thus often treats itself harshly. But whereas for Schopenhauer the cosmic play of manifold phenomena masks an underlying unity, for Nietzsche, as we shall see, the variety of masks masks—if anything—another multiplicity.

Looking back at *The Birth of Tragedy* some sixteen years after its publication, Nietzsche found it to be “full of psychological innovations and artists’ secrets”; and while the former consist in looking at “art in the perspective of life,” the latter invite us to look at life in the perspective of drama. There is a central figure in *The Birth*, a major presence that never appears again in any of his subsequent works—at least not under this name: “the mysterious primordial One” (*BT* 1). The language here is distinctly Schopenhauer-Wagnerian. Insofar as the Apollonian and the Dionysian, as “art-drives of nature,” also play through the human being, the primordial One assumes a quasi personal aspect: the Dionysian artist who has lost his individuality in song and dance is said to become in turn an art-work in the hands of “the Dionysian artist of worlds.” Nietzsche suggests in retrospect that the One is the god Dionysus, through whom an aesthetic meaning for the world can be created in the wake of the death of the metaphysical God of the Platonic-Christian tradition.

In fact the whole book knows only an artistic meaning as a deeper meaning behind all occurring—a “god,” if you will, but certainly only a completely reckless and immoral artist-god, who wants to experience building as in destroying... his own pleasure and autarchy, and who in creating worlds redeems himself from the distress of fullness and overfullness, from the suffering of the conflicting forces compressed within him.

The human counterpart to this figure would be the person of the lyric poet, who, as a precursor of the Attic tragedian and prototype of the human being in general, is a mask of the primordial One. When the lyricist says (or sings) “I,” the word actually issues from a deeper source: “The I of the lyric resounds out of the abyss of Being [Abgrund des Seins].” Whereas the epic poet (and the plastic artist, who is related to him) is able to contemplate his images as something separate from himself, the lyric poet is one with his—as projections from the primordial One. The self of the lyricist is then itself an artistic composition of images projected from a deeper self, and his identity as an “I” dependent on the primordial One, who is the only true “I-ness.” The person of the lyricist is, as it were, a mask of a deeper personality, something that both conceals and reveals the real “I” behind or beneath it.

Nietzsche goes on to argue that a work that is merely subjective is no work of art and a subject in the sense of the egoistic individual can be no artist.

Insofar as the subject is an artist, it has already been released from its individual will and become as it were a medium, through which the one truly existing subject celebrates its redemption in Schein... We are simply images and artistic projections for the true creator and have our highest dignity in our significance as works of art.

The drama of life, then, is “the comedy of art” created by the primordial One (also known as the World-Genius, the True Subject, the Genuine Creator—all Dionysian personifications of Schopenhauerian Will) for its own eternal entertainment, of which it is simultaneously “creator and spectator.” The dignity of the lyric genius—and by extension, though to a lesser extent, of the rest of us—lies in his ability to merge with the primordial world-artist in the act of artistic creation, and thereby become at once “poet, actor, and spectator.”

Nietzsche characterized the members of the Dionysian chorus as consummate artists because of their ability to induce the audience to participate in their projecting a vision of gods and spirits onto the scene behind them (*BT* 8). The chorus is helped in this project by the dramatic effect of the mask—a phenomenon associated in different ways with both Dionysus and Apollo—which presents to the audience the figure of the hero or god being portrayed and thereby helps induce the collective projection of a superhuman image. A similar phenomenon occurs in interactions between persons outside the theater, in the everyday world. Naturally masking, a person puts up a front, a screen that in certain situations invites the projection of an image of divine power. It is in fact precisely there, where strong emotions and passions hold sway, that the personal is infused with a transpersonal power, that thanks to the mask the personal relationship is enhanced by a superhuman presence. Just as Nietzsche’s remarks about tragedy are to be taken to refer to the larger human drama as well, so his talk about masks and projections are susceptible of psychological generalization.

After *The Birth of Tragedy* the themes of masks and masking begin to play a more central role in Nietzsche’s work, both in his looking at life through metaphors of the mask and other aspects of the dramatic arts, and also in his literary styles of masking his meanings with layers of irony, parody, and other tropes. They are also central to his life: at the personal level, he often felt that use of masks was an absolute necessity if he was to continue to live. But before pursuing this theme further, it will help to reflect on some features of the literal mask.

The literal mask is first and foremost a surface, mediating between outside and inside. *Larvatus prodeo*: masked I go forth and present myself as
such-and-such a person. But as it reveals, the mask also conceals: while a literal mask protects the most vulnerable part of the body (the death mask and surgical mask being special and interesting cases), its figurative counterpart conceals that aspect of our exterior which most betrays the inner life. The skin of the face is itself a medium of revelation: through facial expressions—the blush, the twitch, the sudden pallor—we may look shocked, guilty, or shamefaced. Hence the attraction of a mask, behind which the eyes (“windows of the soul”) can see without being easily looked into. Yet these functions of the mask depend on its not being whole: there must be gaps in it, for without holes for the eyes and mouth it cannot be seen and spoken through. A theatrical mask allows selective expression—through dynamics of speech and gestures of the head—of the wearer's feelings, intentions, and desires.

The customary opposition between the mask and the individual him-or herself suggests that masks front or confront some thing called the self, something that maintains its personal identity behind and beneath the procession of different personae one adopts in the course of a day or a life. There is the impression, reflecting on the experience of masking one's feelings or speaking from behind a mask, that how one appears or what one says is other than what one is or believes, that one's “true” self has remained veiled. And that if one would, one could choose to abandon the deception, drop the pretense, face up to reality, and simply be oneself, one self, one's real self. But what would such a self be like? Would it be like—or even be—anything? Or is there perhaps nothing behind the masks, a void beneath the surface, an abyss of emptiness—that might yet turn out, after all, to be some kind of source?

When Nietzsche's interest shifts to the metaphorical mask, he tends at first to see psychological masking as something inauthentic. In the Untimely Meditation on history the mask is a mere front set up to conceal the “weakened personality” characteristic of the modern human being (HL 5). Since we have lost the innocent insight of the child and our instincts have been extinguished by a surfeit of history, “no one any longer dares to show his person, but masks himself as a cultured man, a scholar, a poet, a politician.” Such a weak personality, lacking an inner drive by which to orient itself, timidly consults history in order to learn how to react: “He thus gradually becomes an actor and plays a role—indeed many roles usually, which is why he plays each one so badly and flatly.” Here masks are understood as a compensation for a lack of life-force flowing through the individual, a failure of the instincts to guide the person's life.

In Schopenhauer as Educator, Nietzsche elaborates the theme of the man who is “totally exterior surface with no kernel, a tattered, daubed, puffed up bag of clothes” (SE 1). Out of laziness and fear we cover our individuality with veils that conform to conventional appearances.

But how can we find ourselves again? How can the human being know itself? It is a thing dark and veiled; and if the hare has seven skins, the human can slough off seventy times seven and still not be able to say, “Now that is what you really are, that is no longer outer shell.”

Nietzsche is not so much condemning surface appearances as bemoaning the fact that human beings are so reluctant to engage in the difficult work of penetrating these layers of masks for the sake of self-understanding. He goes on to talk of how people “reach passionately for the fantastic events portrayed in the theater of politics, or else themselves proudly parade about in a hundred masks... industriously mindful of their common comedy and not at all of themselves” (SE 4). Here the metaphor of the theatrical play illuminates an inauthentic way of being, in which one simply plays a role and loses oneself in it—remaining empty of the life force.

In Human, All Too Human, however, Nietzsche intimates a realization that the difference between authentic being and masked seeming may not be so great after all. In an aphorism entitled “How Seeming [Schein] Becomes Being [Sein],” he writes about how the person easily becomes the role that is at first only played.

The actor is ultimately unable, even in the deepest pain, to cease thinking of the impression his person and the whole scenic effect is making, at the funeral of his child for example: he will weep over his own pain and its expressions as his own spectator. The hypocrite who always plays the same role ends up no longer being a hypocrite... . When someone fervently wants for a very long time to seem something, it will eventually be difficult for that person to be anything else. The profession of almost everyone, even of the artist, begins with hypocrisy, with an imitating from outside and a mimicking of what works effectively. One who always wears the mask of friendly expressions must eventually gain power over benevolent moods, without which the expression of friendliness cannot be effected—and finally these moods gain power over him, and he is benevolent. 35

To the extent that the player becomes the role and the face the mask, the difference between authentic and inauthentic would seem to dissolve. Does it make sense to say that the true self is left behind, behind the mask, when the person has become the persona and the individual has identified with
the role? In the presence of Dionysus, god of the mask, the self itself becomes problematic.

The duplex being of Dionysus governs the various dualities of the mask as bidirectional mediator between self and other, inside and outside. In addition to being a distinguished progenitor of ancient Greek drama, Dionysus is a power that annuls personal identity through his roles as god of wine and intoxication, of madness and the dance.° The mask, like its patron deity, effaces individuation. It is in principle usable by anyone, insofar as a young boy can play the part of an old man with the help of a good mask and appropriate posture. A mask that transforms your appearance radically you can pass to me, and it will alter mine in a quite different way; and yet it will annul our respective individualities equally. The production of a plurality of effects by one and the same mask bears testimony to the remarkable multiplying power of masking as a manifestation of Dionysus—poluseidé and polumorphos—god of many forms.

The roles played by masks in the process of deception are complex and multifarious. Just as the literal mask may function to disguise or else protect the wearer’s face, so a person may engage in metaphorical masking for the purpose of self-protection or deception. The use of a mask as disguise does not necessarily intend to deceive, even though it conceals the face; and indeed the beauty of masks as disguise lies in their duplex function of presenting and withholding, revealing and concealing, at the same time. The opaque surface may in this sense serve as a sign for what lies behind it.

The mask is duplex in another sense, in that it may be turned toward the outside or within. We may deceive ourselves either by masking aspects of the external world that we are unwilling to acknowledge (“putting a good face on things”), or else by internal masking, whereby we conceal from ourselves parts of our selves we would rather not face. At the same time, we seldom present ourselves to the outer world fully, but mostly through the medium of masks that conceal some part or parts of our person. Again, this kind of masking is not necessarily deceptive for the sake of self-interest, as the example of “putting up a good front” shows. Its external effect may in turn affect what lies within, insofar as the choice of a particular mask signifies a part of the person and may eventually bring out a side of the personality that would otherwise remain hidden. This possibility becomes important as Nietzsche begins to reflect more on the multiplicity of the personality.

The idea of masking parts of ourselves from ourselves is expressed in an especially pithy aphorism from Dawn of Morning which alludes to the way the sense of self is formed by the opinions of others as well as to the theme of making oneself a work of art: “We are like shop windows in which we ourselves are constantly arranging, concealing, or illuminating our supposed qualities, which others ascribe to us—all in order to deceive our-
of the rest of the world through a variety of aesthetic strategies, and thereby become “poets of our own lives.” Nietzsche clearly wants to retain from the *Un timely Meditations* the view that most people are simply self-deceiving in their refusal to face up to the grim facts of life. But there is another kind of masking that could be called, on account of its self-awareness, “authentic.” Indeed, at its most authentic, this play of masking reaches the level of poetry, where the author becomes the actor. Nietzsche argues that “the higher human beings” who are capable of “seeing and hearing thoughtfully” are no longer simply “spectators and listeners” before the great play of sights and sounds that is life, nor are they simply “actors” in this drama: they are actually “the true poets and continuous creators of life”—by virtue of their creating, as artistic philosophers, “the whole eternally growing world of valuations, colors, weights, perspectives, scales, affirmations and negations,” making of this world a *Dichtung*, a poetic play and literary work (*JS* 301). Not that they compose this poem *ex nihilo* or arbitrarily make it up—any more than a literal poet creates out of nothing or anarchically. As with the rest of us, their phantasy constitutes in concert with other projections a common reality.

Just as the image of the mask in Nietzsche is ambiguous, his remarks in the last book of *The Joyful Science* on actors and role-playing remain somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, European society forces people into a particular role, determined largely by their occupation; one becomes identified with the role, which then constrains development of character along other dimensions: “Almost all Europeans confuse themselves with their role . . . they forget . . . how many other roles they could have played” (*JS* 356). The mask is seen here as something constraining, something that inhibits—as the literal mask does—the range of expression of the fully human being. The pressures of life can form the face into a mask, which then becomes the person so well that the self fuses with, comes to be, its mask. It is possible, however, to go to the other extreme—Nietzsche gives “the Americans today” as an example (one just as valid *today*)—of assuming that a person can play absolutely any part whatsoever. This leads to one’s becoming a total actor and forgetting altogether that one is playing roles.

Nietzsche also pursues the analogy between masks and clothing: “It seems that we Europeans absolutely cannot do without that masquerade which one calls clothes” (*JS* 352). While clothes conceal, they also share the expressive function of masks insofar as they present aspects of our selves and project the appropriate “image.” (Again the effect is bidirectional: much of the impression a well-tailored three-piece suit makes on the viewer comes from the effect it has on the wearer, from the way it draws her out—and into the part.) As for concealment, Nietzsche claims that it is not even “the wild beast of prey” in us that we wish to cover up, but rather “the shameful sight of the tame animal” that morality has made us become. (One thinks, for example, of the modern leather jacket.)

While Nietzsche is now able to recommend histrionics in the nonpejorative sense, he remains deeply ambivalent about “the problem of the actor,” which arises precisely from the histrionic art. He puts it here in quite Dionysian terms that are applicable to life in general:

Falseness with a good conscience; the pleasure in dissimulation bursting forth as a power that pushes aside the so-called “character,” flooding and sometimes extinguishing it; the inner demand for a role and mask, to enter the mode of *seeming* [*Schein*]; an abundance of all kinds of adaptability that can no longer be satisfied in the service of the most immediate and narrow utility. All this is perhaps true not only of the actor? The talk of *Schein* recalls the theme of the Apollonian from *The Birth of Tragedy*. There Nietzsche had speculated that the ancient Greeks were forced, in order to be able to live at all, to mask the terror of the Dionysian abyss by projecting a veil of “beautiful sheen” over it (*BT* 1–2). Since the Apollonian is, like the Dionysian, an “art-drive of nature,” the projection of a world of images in dream or fantasy is not simply an avoidance strategy on the part of a people who finds the real world a vale of tears, nor an arbitrary piece of self-indulgent whimsy on the part of an individual wishing to escape the constraints of reality: it is rather, Nietzsche claims, a process inherent in the nature of things and informing the structure of all life. The process of masking is thus of considerable ontological significance, insofar as it is not something contingently practiced by human beings but is rather woven into the very fabric of existence. Thus, when Nietzsche wonders whether “all this is perhaps true not only of the actor,” he is suggesting that it is true not only of artists but of the actor and artist in himself and every person. “Falseness with a good conscience” is possible because falseness is impossible to avoid: but a good conscience can be enjoyed as long as one faces up to that upon which one is putting a better face, as long as one becomes conscious of playing a part.

Nietzsche’s understanding of the necessity and desirability of masks finds its consummate expression in *Beyond Good and Evil*, which is his first major exercise in literary masking—aside from *Zarathustra*—and a masterpiece of esoteric writing. Early on the author announces, self-referentially, that “everything that is profound loves masks” (*BGE* 40). A note from the period points up the pathos behind this utterance, remarking the necessity—for some—of “taking refuge” in happiness:

We sit ourselves down on the street where life rolls by in a drunken procession of masks . . . doesn’t it seem as if we know something that
makes us afraid? With which we don't want to be alone. A knowledge of something that makes us tremble, whose whispering makes us pale? This stubborn aversion from mournful dramas... this arbitrary Epicureanism of the heart, which worships the mask as its ultimate deity and savior... It seems as if we know ourselves to be all too fragile, perhaps shattered already and unhealable; it seems as if we fear the hand of life, and that it must shatter us, and we take refuge in life's sheen. . . . We are serious, we know the abyss: that's why we are defensive with respect to everything serious.

Numerous themes come together here, from the necessity for a veil of Apollonian Schein to mask the abyss, to the idea that all life is a play, drama, intoxicating and devastating tragedy—and that the sense of theater must be maintained if one is not to go under.

The aphorism from Beyond Good and Evil emphasizes again the extent to which the mask, the surface of one who is profound, is formed also by external forces, projections from outside. Everyone who knows his depths well enough will want a mask—

and supposing he does not want it, he would still some day realize that there is nevertheless a mask of himself there—and that that is good. Every profound spirit needs a mask: moreover, around every profound spirit a mask is continually growing, thanks to the constantly false, namely shallow interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he gives.

In fact one need not even be so profound to have experienced incongruous reactions from other people based on their projections of inappropriate features onto one's expression. The drive to dissimulate recurs in this text, in the form of

that not unproblematic readiness of the spirit to deceive other spirits and to dissimulate before them, that constant pressure and compulsion of a creative, image-forming, changeable force: in this the spirit enjoys the multiplicity and craftsmanship of its masks, and also enjoys the feeling of security in this—it is precisely through its protean arts that it is best defended and concealed! (BGE 230)

Again this creative force is understood as a natural drive, and as such is neither to be lauded nor deplored: our responsibility is to be aware of how it works through us, and our prerogative to let it play. But the “creative, image-forming, changeable force” mentioned here is always in tension with another drive of “the spirit.”

Counter to this will to sheen [Wille zum Schein], to simplification, to the mask and cloak, to the surface in short—since every surface is a cloak—there works that sublime inclination of the one who would know, who takes and wants to take things profoundly, multiply, thoroughly: as a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste.

This passage makes clear Nietzsche's view that there is in the human spirit a fundamental tension generated by the opposing drives to mask and to unmask. Nietzsche the genealogist, the great unmasker, is at the same time a past master of masking and a consummate respecter of veils. The mask is behind one of the last questions of the book, in which the author asks "whether behind every one of [the philosopher's] caves there is not, must not be, another deeper cave... an abyss behind every ground, beneath every "grounding"—prompting the further question: "behind every mask, another mask?" Perhaps there is no firm face as foundation for the makeup, no substantial self. Or is Nietzsche not to be trusted in this matter, with these confessions of a mask? He ends the aphorism after all with the enigmatic caution: "Every philosophy also conceals a philosophy; every opinion is also a hiding-place; every word also a mask" (BGE 289).

If we remember that the Dionysian personality plays many roles, and if we bring all Nietzsche's talk about the human spirit's "multiplicity of masks" together with his idea of the multiplicity of persons within the soul, the conclusion follows that we can play a plurality of parts in the course of a day or a life, donning and doffing a variety of personas, thanks precisely to the plurality of persons within each one of us. If one entertains Shakespeare's image of all the world as a stage, then all the men and women may not be merely players. And if one man in his time plays many parts, his acts may succeed one another more rapidly than the seven ages enumerated by Jaques might suggest. The idea of life as drama, and the world as theater, played out in each person by more than one player. And in view of the archaic nature of the drives behind these persons, it is reasonable to conclude further that the plays enacted by these characters will not be only contemporary, but will rather be informed (like the Attic tragedies that inspired Nietzsche's early work) by ancient myths and mythemes. While the details of the stories we act out, as well as the characters in them, will appear new, the basic plots and figures are not. And yet because of his concern to distance himself from the Schopenhauerian-Wagnerian enthusiasm for myth, Nietzsche declines to elaborate further.

Schopenhauer suggested that if the drama of life has a plan, "then fate is the director"; transposed to the inner realm of multiple actors, this image suggests what one might call "the soul as theater company." But again Nietzsche's ambivalence about the figure of the actor, as evidenced by his
ultimate characterization of Wagner as the bad actor par excellence, may have prevented him from developing this idea.\footnote{44}

Ordering the Psyche Polytic

*Faust complained that he had two souls in his breast. I have a whole squabbling crowd. It goes on as in a republic.*

Bismarck

As Nietzsche's conception of the psyche as a polycentric field of persons developed, he became more engaged by the question framed by Plato concerning the ways in which this inner population might be ordered politically, or the optimal disposition of the forces that hold sway in the intrapersonal community.\footnote{45} Although he never actually mentions Plato in his remarks concerning the political organization of the psyche, it is illuminating to look at his ideas in the light of the analogy elaborated in the *Republic*, and enlightening to try to discern as clearly as possible just where and how they diverge from Plato's. Both thinkers agree on the value of likening the multiplicity of the soul to the community of the *polis*, and that various kinds of intrapsychical political organization are possible. The interesting question, with which we shall begin, is this: Which does each regard as the optimal regime, and for what reasons?

To read the *Republic* for its psychology means taking its principal image seriously, its picture of the individual psyche as a city populated by a multitude of persons. In book 2 Socrates is challenged by his interlocutors to show "what profit justice in itself is to the man who possesses it, and what harm injustice does" (Rep. 367d). Because of the difficulty in discerning precisely what justice consists in, Socrates proposes the analogy between the individual and the city, on the grounds that justice will be more easily visible in the larger entity.

Perhaps there would be more justice in the bigger and it would be easier to observe closely. If you want, first we'll investigate what justice is like in the cities. Then, we'll also go on to consider it in individuals. ... If we should watch a city come into being in speech [we] might also see its justice coming into being, and its injustice. (Rep. 368e–369a)

Proceeding to let "a city come into being in speech," Socrates elaborates an image of the ideal *polis* which he extends through to the last two books of the dialogue, by which time the more important city is the inner city, and his frequent talk of "the regime inside the man" and "the regime within" has become perfectly natural.

Socrates suggests that the most just regime for a city is one in which each citizen "is brought to that which naturally suits him—one man, one job—so that each man, practicing his own, which is one, will not become many but one; and thus, you see, the whole city will naturally grow to be one and not many" (Rep. 423d). Injustice in the city obtains when members of the three classes of citizens meddle in the business of citizens of other classes, and justice when proper ordering prevails:

Meddling among the classes, of which there are three, and exchange with one another is the greatest harm for the city ... [whereas] the money-making, auxiliary, and guardian classes doing what's appropriate, each of them minding its own business in a city, would be justice and would make the city just. (Rep. 434c)

Socrates then proposes applying what they have learned about justice in the city to the case of the individual. Applying the division of citizens into three classes to the individual yields the three forms of the soul: the repetitive, spirited, and calculating. Justice in the soul is then characterized as the condition in which "each of the three parts minds its own business," and where the calculating part rules over the other two, since "it possesses within it the knowledge of that which is beneficial for each part and for the whole composed of the community of these three parts" (441e, 442c). The just man doesn't let each part in him mind other people's business or the three classes in the soul meddle with each other, but really sets his own house [*ta oikeia*] in good order and rules himself; he arranges himself, becomes his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts, exactly like three notes in a harmonic scale, lowest, highest, and middle. And if there are some other parts in between, he binds them together and becomes entirely one from many, moderate and harmonized. (Rep. 443d)

This passage brings images of ruling and domestic economy together with a musical metaphor that suggests the kind of unity to be fashioned from multiplicity. The supposition that there might be more parts "in between" the three suggests that if we take the analogy between the city and the individual seriously, the tripartite division into classes of citizens would be only a first step. The image Socrates elaborates is susceptible of finer differentiation—ultimately into a much larger plurality of practitioners, a population (in principle) of thousands.\footnote{46} His final summation of justice in the soul is expressed simply in terms of power relations: "To produce justice is to establish the parts of the soul in a relation of mastering, and being mastered by, one another that is according to nature" (444d).

In view of the isomorphism between *polis* and psyche, Socrates suggests
that there are "likely to be as many types of soul as there are types of regimes possessing distinct forms," and that the regime corresponding to the rule of the calculating part over the other two will be "kingship" if there is one ruler and "aristocracy" if there are several (Rep. 445c-d). He is about to go on to speak of four other types of regime corresponding to bad and unjust arrangements within the individual soul when the others interrupt and force him to say more about the nature of community in the best external regime.

It is not until book 8 that Socrates resumes his characterization of the four remaining types of regime and the corresponding personality types, a consideration of which will allow the discussants to decide which regime is the happiest and best (Rep. 544a). After reminding his listeners of his claim that the best man is like an aristocracy, Socrates describes a progressive degeneration of the individual through four further types of inner regime corresponding to timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. Nietzsche would for the most part concur in rejecting these degenerate regimes. The prospect of an inner timocracy, with the entire psyche driven by the spirited part and under the domination of the fact that loves victory and honor, would no doubt appeal to the "warrior spirit" in Nietzsche, but he would deplore the concomitant diminution of the passion for knowledge and understanding.

Similarly an inner oligarchy, in which the appetitive part of the soul dominates and love of money and physical pleasure prevails, would be no more appealing to Nietzsche than to Socrates. The only redeeming feature of the oligarchic arrangement, for Socrates, is that miserly acquisitiveness "enables" all desires other than the "necessary" ones; but since such a person must "forcibly hold down the bad desires," he would be divided against himself and there would be "faction within" him (Rep. 554a-d). Although such a man might be "more graceful than many," "the true virtue of the single-minded and harmonized soul would escape far from him." Nietzsche would be less concerned with single-mindedness, and does not see self-division as necessarily a bad thing—though he would have nothing but contempt for the motive force at work in this case.

The image of Nietzsche as a revolutionary often leads people to imagine that politically he would favor democracy, and would thus be a democrat psychopolitically too. It is thus worth showing why he is in fact as against democracy intrapsychically as he is in real politics. One can begin with the grounds for Socrates' low estimation of democracy as a regime under which "the city is full of freedom and free speech . . . and license to do whatever one wants" (Rep. 557b). This freedom and license give rise to a variegated multiplicity, the attractions of which Socrates depicts with a brush more heavily soaked in irony than usual.

[Democracy] is probably the fairest of the regimes. Just like a many-colored cloak decorated in all hues, this regime, decorated with all dispositions, would also look fairest, and many perhaps, like boys and women looking at many-colored things, would judge this to be the fairest regime.47

Because of the multiplicity of regimes in microcosm democracy contains, it is "a convenient place to look for a regime." Indeed anyone in the business of organizing a city is advised to visit a democracy and simply choose—as in "a bazaar" or general store—whatever type of regime he desires. Democracy is said to be "a sweet regime, without rulers and many-colored, dispensing a certain equality to equals and unequals alike."44 Nietzsche could hardly have put the problem more pointedly himself: it is the assumption of equality that renders democracy ridiculous in his eyes from the start. Like Plato, Nietzsche sees that people are by no means equal and similarly believes in the benefits of orders of rank, of gradations from noble to base.

According to Socrates' genealogy of the democratic type of man, one party of desires within a young soul oligarchically organized is fed and reinforced by "desires of a kindred and like form from without" (Rep. 559e). Alliances are then formed to strengthen the oligarchic party within, so that "faction and counterfaction arise in him and he does battle with himself." But again the base desires grow and multiply in secret, and finally rise up and "take the acropolis of the young man's soul, perceiving it empty of fair studies and practices and true speeches, and it’s these that are the best watchmen and guardians in the thought of men whom the gods love."45 If the young man can eventually bring about some sort of accommodation between the oligarchic party within him and the successful invaders, he will end up with a democratic regime.

He then lives his life in accord with a certain equality of pleasures he has established. To whichever one happens along, as though it were chosen by the lot, he hands over the rule within himself until it is satisfied; and then again to another, dishonoring none but fostering them all on the basis of equality . . . And there is neither order nor necessity in his life . . . This man is all various and full of the greatest number of dispositions . . . Many men and women would admire his life because it contains the most patterns of regimes and characters.40

Nietzsche might appear on the surface to find the idea of an intrapsychical democracy somewhat more appealing than the external kind—at least so far as it involves a rotation through a multiplicity of desires dominating and styles of governing. What pulls him away from Socrates on this issue is, as usual, the ancient tension between the one and the many. Whereas the ideal for Socrates is an arrangement in which "each man, practicing his own,
which is one, will become not many but one" (Rep. 423d), for Nietzsche, the advocate of "many-stringed culture," one can "become what one is" precisely through acknowledging one's multiplicity and employing the energies generated by the conflicts within it. "Love of one is a barbarism," reads one of his briefest aphorisms, "for it is practiced at the expense of all others" (BGE 67). And one would find a person's "greatness," if one were a philosopher, "precisely in his embracing comprehensiveness and multiplicity" (BGE 212). The great number and variety of characters and regimes embodied by the democratic type could, with proper organization, conduce to a fluidity of leadership of which Nietzsche would surely approve.

Nevertheless, he would be as dismissive as Socrates of a life that lacked "order and necessity," and perhaps even more concerned that a Rangordnung be acknowledged—within as well as among individuals. Even if the rulers change from time to time, at least there must be rulers who exercise power; for Nietzsche the democratic type of soul is too undiscriminating, slack, and anarchic to be productive. His later paradigm for such a soul is Wagner, whom he would regard as vacillating between the democratic and tyrannical types. He often speaks as if Wagner failed to organize his "multiplicity, abundance, and arbitrariness"—unless by resorting to tyranny—and was thus the typical decadent, whose style consists in "anarchy of atoms, disgregation of the will, 'freedom of the individual' morally speaking—expanded into a political theory: 'equal rights for all'" (CW 11, 7). Had it not been for the fact that "the tyrant within him, his actor's genius, compelled him," Wagner's lack of self-discipline would have prevented him from achieving anything worthwhile.

Indeed the great danger of the democratic regime, for Socrates, is precisely its tendency to degenerate into tyranny, which he regards as the worst possible regime, internally as well as externally. What democratic types tout as "complete freedom" becomes in the son of a democratic man "complete hostility to law," and this leaves him open to the blandishments of "dread enchanters and tyrant-makers" (Rep. 572d-e). These bad influences "contrive to implant some love [erōs] in him—a great winged drone—to be the leader of the idle desires that insist on all available resources being distributed to them." Erōs would thus be the archetypal drive in Nietzsche's sense, the drive of drives. In the preceding three regimes there is—despite the domination by one particular faction—some degree of balance, insofar as each of the three parts of the soul retains some measure of representation. The tyrannical regime is the worst kind because, in the person "in whom the tyrant love dwells and pilots all the elements of the soul," erōs "lives like a tyrant... in all anarchy and lawlessness; and, being a monarch, will lead the man whom it controls, as though he were a city, to every kind of daring..." (Rep. 573d, 575a). This situation can lead to the complete subjugation of the calculating and spirited parts of the soul, leaving the desiring part to dominate absolutely—a condition shown in Socrates' famous depiction of the tyrannical type to be the unhappiest of all.

Nietzsche had direct experience of the tyrannical personality in his relationship with Wagner, and was himself no stranger to the dangers of intra-psychical tyranny.51 While he would by no means endorse the absolute tyranny condemned by Socrates, he does see psychical tyranny as a sometimes necessary evil—and, for certain creative types, as a welcome evil to be cultivated for the enhancement of humanity as a whole. This is a crucial point, and one overlooked by readers who imagine Nietzsche's ideal to consist in undisciplined, Dionysian letting-it-all-flow-out. We noted earlier his appreciation of the way a tyrannical drive, precisely by virtue of its monopolizing all the available energies, can accumulate tremendous power, which can be directed toward effecting great things. And so, for Nietzsche, a form of tyranny in which one's task (Aufgabe) in life, as constituted by a particular complex of drives, holds ruthless sway over the other members of the psychical community may be a most productive arrangement—though by no means a comfortable one (for either the person tyrannized or those around him). He characterizes the Aufgabe, "that hidden and imperious something," as "the tyrant in us [that] wreaks terrible retribution for every attempt we make to avoid or elude it."52

In the light of the importance of this theme in Nietzsche, his extended criticism of Socrates in Twilight of the Idols is somewhat overdone. Given Nietzsche's almost fanatical concern with self-mastery for most of his life, which translated into frequent commendations of that virtue in his philosophical writings, a regime in which the highest part of the soul rules the lower parts could not be entirely inimical to him. In "The Problem of Socrates" he writes concerning the situation in fifth-century Athens that "everywhere the instincts were in anarchy," and that Socrates' response was to say: "The drives want to play the tyrant; one must devise a countertyrant who is stronger." Socrates is said to have attained "self-mastery" by setting up reason as such a "countertyrant." This position—of "rationality at any cost" and "having to fight the instincts"—Nietzsche brands as décadence.53 The overemphasis on tyranny gives an unfair picture of Socrates's prescription for justice within the soul, which calls simply for "[a feeding of] the desiring part of the soul in such a way that it is neither in want nor surfeited," allowing it (as long as it "minds its own business") to "enjoy its own pleasures [as] the best pleasures" (Rep. 571e, 586e)—where the qualification "the best" is presumably intended to rule out the lower part's pleasure in tyrannical domination. Recall, too, the solution Socrates proposed in terms of the Chimerical image of the tripartite soul, in which the human being within is to
was an equivocation concerning the role of the intellect.

of an interplay of drives without any separate ruler different in kind, there

his career.

to consider briefly how Nietzsche understands the
detailed picture of the inner regime. But before looking at these, we need

importance in Nietzsche's psychology with the publication of

unpublished notes he made during the writing of this book provide a more

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ejects and installs, suppresses and fosters, awakens and soothes? It is

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siring part the great king within

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the tripartite psyche-at least until the degeneration

Platonic account of the progressive degeneration of the inner regime from

a monarchy of the intellect to the type dominated “from below” by the ty­
rant erõs. Socrates speaks throughout as if there exists an overseeing agent

the soul, is to be understood as

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souls"

of the drives and

"social

structure of the drives and

sides"

An earlier note reads:

The multiplicity of persons (masks) in one 'I'."

Just as the soul is to be understood as “social structure of the drives and

affects,” so the body, which is for Nietzsche distinct but not different from

the soul, is to be understood as “a social structure of many souls” (BGE 19).

In a note from 1885 he recommends taking the body and physiology as a

model, since by so doing

we gain the right idea of the nature of our subject-unity, namely as

regents at the head of a community . . . also of the dependence of these regents on those who are ruled and conditions of order of rank
and division of labor as what makes possible both the individual and

the whole. Just as living unities are constantly arising and perishing

and there is no “eternity” to the subject . . . . The definite ignorance

in which the regent is kept concerning the particular activities and even

disturbances within the community belongs to the very conditions un­
der which government is possible . . . . The most important thing,

however, is that we understand the ruler and his subjects [Untertanen]

as being of the same nature—all feeling, willing, thinking . . . . To

inquire of the subject [Subjekt] directly concerning the nature of the

subject is risky because it could well be useful, and important for its

activity, for the subject to misinterpret itself. For that reason we ask

the body . . . [in order to] see whether the subordinates themselves

might not deal with us directly."
It is significant that the rulers are described as *regents*—figures merely standing in for others—rather than as monarchs, since this helps dispel the idea of a permanent, self-identical governing agent. There is some ambiguity here concerning whether there is only one regent at a time or more than one. Given the idea of living unities constantly arising and perishing and the discontinuity of rulers and ruled, one may assume that at times there might be a single regent and at other times a regency comprising several members.

Another note from 1885 confirms the idea that the intellect is a tool and emphasizes the multiple nature of the regency:

> It all depends on the proper characterization of the unity that comprises thinking, willing, feeling and all the affects: clearly the intellect is only a tool, but in whose hands? In the hands of the affects certainly: and these are a multiplicity behind which it is not necessary to posit a unity: it suffices to conceive the multiplicity as a regency.

The "proper characterization of the unity" of our mental and psychical life would then be as a multiplicity that is configured in such a way that a group of drives or affects holds at least temporary hegemony over the whole. The idea of a governing group rather than individual is emphasized in another note from the same year:

> The assumption of the *unitary subject* is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a plurality of subjects whose interplay and struggle are the ground of our thinking and our consciousness in general? A kind of *aristocracy* of "cells", in which the power to rule resides? Certainly of equals who are accustomed to ruling and know how to command?

*My hypotheses:*

- the subject as multiplicity
- the constant transitoriness and ephemerality of the subject, "mortal soul".

The notion of a ruling aristocracy is familiar from the *Republic*; but the difference is that these rulers are to be understood not as representatives of reason, constituents of the "calculating part" of the psyche, or as enduring self-identical agents, but rather as offices or positions capable of being held by a succession of different figures.

One last note from the end of 1885 sketches a program for the drives and affects that Nietzsche will advocate until the end of his career, and which again acknowledges their archaic dimension.

> *Overcoming the affects? No, not if that means their weakening and annihilation. But to take them into service:* which may involve tyrannizing them for a long time (not even as an individual, but as a community, a race, etc.). Eventually one gives them back their freedom with confidence: they love us like good servants and ultimately go where our best inclines.

Here we see that the tyranny that organizes the chaos of the affects is not quite the work of a lifetime; though it is a protracted task, in the ideal case the tyranny is "eventually" relaxed in such a way that one can enjoy spontaneous existence; but it is in a sense the work of a series of lifetimes, insofar as it can take many generations before the requisite organization is attained.

Good Nietzscheans will want to ask at this point: *Who*, or which agency, tyrannizes the affects and takes them into service? and, if the tyrannized affects are to be given back their freedom, *to whom* are they then to act as "good servants"? To answer "I" and "to me" is now uninformative, in view of the dissolution of the I into a multiplicity; the answer is presumably: to an affect or drive, or group of affects or drives, acting as a regency, or as a group of aristocratic affects provisionally in power. Nietzsche also refers to the power that dominates affects or passions as "the will," which would sound strangely conventional—will versus the passions—had the will not been resolved into a multiplicity, as above all "a complex of feelings" and "an affect of command" (*BGE* 19). A note from 1887 reads:

> Summa: mastery over the passions, not their weakening or extirpation! The greater the will's power of mastery, the more freedom may be given to the passions. The "great human being" is great by virtue of the range of free play of his desires and of the still greater power that is able to take these magnificent monsters into service.

The will that "masters" the passions turns out then, somewhat paradoxically, to be constituted by them. This is made clear in a note from the following year, under the heading "Role of Consciousness," where Nietzsche denies that consciousness plays any part in directing the "subterranean" interplay of somatic operations. The "higher authority [Instanz]" is "a kind of directing committee in which the various dominanti desires make their voices and power effective." Here it is made explicit that the directing agency is, as it were, a committee constituted by the desires that dominate at the time.

Now it is possible to lay out the grounds for the differences between Nietzsche and Plato as far as internal politics are concerned. Given that under the optimal Platonic regime the ruling reason attempts to "befriend" the lower drives and direct the necessary nourishment to all but the most antisocial of them, Nietzsche's dissatisfaction with this arrangement appears to have two grounds. The first concerns the drawbacks of what might
be called—to paraphrase one of his own wittier coinages—a “monotonoc- 
ocracy” of single-minded reason. In Plato the coordination of the desires 
takes place under the direction of a reason that is always self-identical, 
remaining the same over the course of the individual’s development. In view 
of Nietzsche’s contrasting emphasis on “becoming” over “being”—whether 
in the inner or the outer realms—he could hardly advocate a single drive’s 
remaining in charge indefinitely. The notes just considered suggest a model 
in which a succession of drives, each of which would in principle be capable 
of “philosophizing,” cycle through the highest office in accordance with the 
 experiential context and the individual’s stage of development. It would 
be a question of an aristocracy rather than a monarchy, of dissolving the 
philosopher-king into a governing body of several thinkers, splintering the 
hegemony of the intellect into a matrix of relationships among the various 
affects, drives, and passions. Such an arrangement would be dictated by the 
idea that the intellect is nothing other than “a certain relationship of the 
drives to each other,” which is recapitulated in a late note (1887–88): “The 
misunderstanding of passion and reason, as if the latter were an entity in 
 itself and not rather a condition of relationships among various passions and 
desires; and as if every passion did not have its quantum of reason.” On 
this view reason would not be seen as a permanent ruler, nor as an independent 
director at the head; there would be no need for any leader separate from the led.

While Nietzsche is by no means an irrationalist, he follows Herder in 
 relativizing reason by integrating it with the other powers of the soul, and 
thus cannot endorse the Platonic identification of reason as the royal road 
to virtue and happiness. For Plato, “one must imitate Socrates and institute 
a perpetual daylight in opposition to the dark desires—the daylight of rea­ 
on. One must be clever, clear, bright at any cost: every giving in to the 
instincts, to the unconscious, leads downward.” The problem with such a 
regime, for Nietzsche, is that the balance of power in the psyche is too one-
sided, overly top-heavy, for a fruitful and creative existence. It depends, of 
course, on just what one wants to become. For a life that is calm and serene 
(if rather boring), he would surely endorse the soul well harmonized under 
the rule of single-minded reason, a paradigm of Apollonian order. But for 
a richer life he would hold it necessary to celebrate a greater pressure of 
population in the psyche, to allow more Dionysiac disposition of forces, 
one capable of sustaining changing rulers and the tensions of tyranny, as 
well as chronic polemos among parties in the polis within. In this case the 
vicious and violent drives whose growth Socrates wants to hinder would 
be—though restrained and trained—retained as indispensable sources of 
energy.

And with this we arrive at the second, related source of Nietzsche’s dis-
satisfaction with the Platonic ideal, which is a more general concern with 
the amount and distribution of energy within the psyche, with what since 
Freud has been called “libidinal economics.” Nietzsche is reluctant to en­ 
dorse the Platonic prescription for “starving the savage heads of the beast” 
(hindering the growth of negative drives) because of the loss of energy this 
would entail, and the resultant sapping of the creative urge. He is concerned 
rather to retain as many powerful energies as possible within the “great 
economy” of the soul. In view of the power that has traditionally been as­ 
cribed to the “many-headed beast” of the lower drives, and of the savagery 
of the beasts of prey that prowl through the Nietzschean psyche, how does 
one pull off the difficult trick of training without taming, of harnessing the 
power of the “magnificent monsters” of the passions without damaging or 
being savaged by them?

Several chapters in Twilight of the Idols help answer this question by 
filling out the pattern sketched in the note from 1885: “Eventually one gives 
gives them back their freedom with confidence: they love us like good servants 
and ultimately go where our best inclines.” What emerges from the later text 
is a picture of a two-phase relationship with the drives. The initial state 
is characterized by “the inability to resist a stimulus,” and the response that 
constitutes the first phase is a “preschooling in spirituality.” This prepara­ 	ory education involves “not reacting immediately to a stimulus, but gaining 
control over the restraining, repressing instincts.” This first phase is the 
same as in the Platonic-Socratic program, but is for Nietzsche simply a 
preliminary strategy for the sake of an eventually greater freedom. An ear­ 
er aphorism entitled “Self-control” makes it clear that this virtue is merely 
a means and by no means an end in itself. A person all of whose energies 
are directed toward self-control is no dancer, but rather “stands there with a 
gesture that wards off, armed against himself”: 

Of course he can thereby be great! But how intolerable he has now 
become for others, how difficult for himself, how impoverished and 
cut off from the most beautiful chance occurrences of the soul! And 
from all further instruction! For one must be able to lose oneself from 
time to time, if one wants to learn something from things other than 
ourselves.

Nietzsche goes on to explain that he understands Geist, or spirit, as “the 
great self-mastery”; but he then concludes—and this is the crux—“One 
must have need of spirit in order to attain spirit; one loses it when one no 
longer needs it” (TI 9.14). The will’s “power of mastery” becomes such that 
it is now safe to “give back to the drives their freedom,” in the confidence 
that they will now “go where our best inclines.” By the end of this second 
phase, in which “the entire affective system is stimulated and intensified,”
one is able to act with total spontaneity—strangely but knowingly “unable not to react”—moved now by the mysterious power of Dionysus (TI 9.10).

One can fully channel the power of the “negative” drives only when one has the courage to relax the harsh discipline to which they have long been subjected, allowing their massive energies to flow again through the “great economy” of the soul. This is a dangerous undertaking which conduces to a kind of freedom of which only the greater human beings are capable.

One would have to look for the highest type of free human being there where the greatest resistance is constantly being overcome: five steps away from tyranny, right at the threshold of the danger of servitude. This is psychologically true, if one understands the “tyrants” here as terrible and relentless instincts, which demand a maximum of authority and discipline to counter them. (TI 9.38)

The source of this “authority and discipline” will not be the ego or reason or something other than the drives, but rather simply another instinct or drive, or group of drives. This organization of forces verges on tyranny in two directions: it issues from the relaxation of protracted tyranny on the part of ordering drives, and it is thus always in danger of relapsing into tyranny at the hands of previously subdued forces that have regained sufficient strength to cause chaos again. Nietzsche presents a paradigm of the highest type of human being in the person of Goethe: “What he wanted was totality... he disciplined himself into a totality, he created himself” (TI 9.49). Goethe's greatness lies in his ability to live his ideal:

Goethe conceived of a strong, highly cultured human being, adept in a range of physical skills [Leiblichkeiten], self-controlled and with reverence for himself, who can dare to grant himself the full range and richness of naturalness, and who is strong enough for this freedom. This courage to “grant oneself the full range of richness and naturalness” is the key to burgeoning psychological health for Nietzsche. At some point in the practice of self-discipline it is possible to relax control of the “magnificent monsters” that are the drives, affects, and passions, and trust them to move us spontaneously in the appropriate ways. The aphorism concludes with the affirmation that belief that such an ideal is livable is belief in Dionysus—but this would be a Dionysian life that is no longer in opposition to Apollonian existence but has superseded it by incorporating and going beyond it.

It is difficult, ultimately, to express the organization of this kind of great soul in political terms. In the initial stages it may be that a monarch (that one could call reason, intellect, or will, and which calls itself “T”) is established, who severely disciplines the unruly elements in the psyche. But in a soul disposed to creative activity, a particular combination of drives—one’s "task"—will take over, in the persons of “an aristocracy of regents,” who would continue to rule with iron hands. According to one’s stage of development and the external situation, the composition of this regency would change over time, with new drives joining and old ones leaving or being dismissed. After a period of this kind of regime—a sort of “serial tyranny by committee”—the originally unruly drives may have undergone sufficient discipline for the iron rule to be lifted. The ideal state would be one in which as much power as possible is ultimately returned to the greatest variety of energetic drives, affects, and passions, in the expectation that all parties will spontaneously organize themselves to the optimal benefit of the “psychopolis” as a whole. The will that would then hold gentle sway over the monstrously powerful drives no longer operates only through the conscious ego, but rather works and plays as “will to power”—a configuration of the interpretive energies that constitute life in the widest sense.

We recall, however, that Nietzsche eventually proposes that not only all life but all force whatsoever—the world as a whole—be considered as a play of will to power. Looking back over the topics through which we have ranged and the levels of discourse with which we have dealt, it appears that for Nietzsche the answer to the question of what the soul is like is that ultimately it is like everything: galaxies, solar systems, minerals from rocks to metals, bodies of water, dances of fire and wind. The soul of the soul supports plant life, which in turn nourishes the faunae of the psyche. Not only natural worlds but the worlds of human community move and have their being within as well as without. As Aristotle said, the soul is in a way all things, and so the boundaries between inner and outer are dissolved. This was a major theme in Zarathustra—as announced in the protagonist's prologue:

I love him whose soul is overfull, so that he forgets himself, and all things are in him: thus all things become his going under. (Z, P4)

If all things are in the soul, there is no longer any outside; which means the perishing of the separate self. And yet the ideal is no static condition, but rather one of overflow, downfall, and uprush—flows of eros in Dionysian Rausch, a constant arising and abating of drives. Zarathustra praises above all

the most comprehensive soul, that can run and wander and roam farthest within itself... the soul that loves itself the most, in which all things have their streaming and counter-streaming, their ebb and flood.
He addresses his own soul, who is "waiting for overflow," as follows:

O my soul, there is nowhere a soul that would be more loving and embracing and comprehensive than you! Where would future and past be closer together than in you? (Z 3.14)

Recall all the images of overflow, _Überfluss_, that pervade the text of _Zarathustra_. When one looks into the source of such abundance, it appears to be the world itself: Zarathustra says to those who, like he himself, are striving after the virtue of effusive generosity:

You force all things to yourselves and into yourselves, that they may flow back out of your spring as gifts of your love.\*\(^5^6\)

A suggestion here of systole and diastole in the flows of _erōs_. The influx also comes from the past, as we saw, driving in from afar with natural efflux. Living life to the full would then be a matter of _flowing_ or streaming rather than simply going with the flow that flows through all things.

This, then, is the sense in which _Thus Spoke Zarathustra_ is a play of images constituting a consummate picture of the most comprehensive soul, of psyche in totality. It is possible, and enlightening, to read the entire text as a complex image of a single soul—Zarathustra's—and to understand as the major theme the Dionysian dissolution of the unitary I through multiple overflows into a plurality of persons, in the context of a plethora of natural phenomena. The first indication that all the characters in the book are aspects of Zarathustra's personality is that the second of the twenty-two speeches in part one, which is entitled "Zarathustra's Speeches," is actually delivered by a "wise man" who is clearly an alter ego for the protagonist (Z 1.2). Beginning with the soothsayer in part 2 (2.19), and culminating in the host of "higher humans" in part four, a variety of "alter" types takes the stage. The most telling event is Zarathustra's inviting all these characters into his cave on the mountain-top, that sacrosanct haven of solitude, toward the end of the book.\(^7^8\) This invitation and reconciliation is equivalent to the process described by depth psychology in which the I faces and attempts to come to terms with all the parts of the psyche that have been subject to repression or projection onto others. The final ending of _Zarathustra_ is enigmatic, insofar as the higher humans fail to assimilate the protagonist's teachings and remain resistant to change, forcing Zarathustra to the realization that they are not the companions he needs after all.

The life that is lived comprehensively as will to power, having gone through Apollonian discipline and beyond the realm of spirit, will range through all the domains of Dionysus through channeling a maximal influx from the life of the past so as to generate the most fecund future. Nietzsche exemplifies this kind of life in the figure of the _Übermensch_. Insofar as this figure is "the sense of the earth" one remains—even at the peak of high culture—the soil of the soul, the streaming rain that showers upon it, the sun that shines on the sap that drives vegetation up from the earth, as well as the storms that test and strengthen that striving growth. We still "grow as plants," as Herder said.

The _oikos_ of Dionysus embraces the sap of plants and the powers of animals as well as humans. In Dionysus is the wisdom of the serpent, the pride of the panther, lion, and eagle. To aspire to the condition of the _Übermensch_ is not to abandon one's animal nature but to train and thereby sublimate it. Just as Dionysus appears as a variety of animals, so the life of the _Übermensch_ incorporates and exemplifies the animal in its modes of perceiving and acting—but an animal that has been bred and disciplined and so infused with human spirit that its spontaneity is now _supernatural_. Zarathustra's speech on the transformations of the spirit into camel, lion, and child is not meant to imply that the animal realm is transcended: when one no longer needs spirit one leaves it behind and enters the realm of the Dionysian, where vegetal and animal functions are quickened by their having passed through the human spirit.

To return, finally, to _Twilight of the Idols_: the spontaneity that comes from granting oneself the full range of naturalness is rooted in an adroitness of the well trained body (Leib)—in what Nietzsche calls, with reference to Goethe, skillful _Leiblichkeit_.

"The proper place of culture," he insists, "is the body" (TI 9.47). It is a matter of attuning the flows of energy that comprise the body with the flows of energies that comprise the macrocosm so as to attain the state of _strömen_—the streaming that goes beyond "going with the flow" to _flowing_ with the flows. This requires the strength and suppleness we have seen Nietzsche assert as preconditions of the genuinely Dionysian _dance_.\(^7^9\)

It is not only the flows of the macrocosm, the forces of nature, that are dangerous in their massive power, but also—because of the archaic dimension—the flows within the individual body. Nietzsche, emphasizes the dangers when he explicates his "concept of genius" (TI 9.44), characterizing great men and great ages as "explosive materials in which an enormous amount of force has been accumulated." The great human being, the genius, is a "squanderer" of the enormous influx that is the source of greatness:

He flows out [strömt aus], he overflows [strömt über], he consumes himself and does not spare himself—fatally, disastrously, involuntarily, as a river that bursts its banks does so involuntarily.

A major source of the danger is then this: that even when the individual possesses in great measure the plastic power that would assimilate the past, there is at the stage where control has been relaxed and one is daring to
be natural no guarantee that the delicate balance can be maintained. One's openness to the drives that flow in from the archaic (and more recent) past has to correspond to the capacity to assimilate—yet without the help of an independent regulatory agency. If such an agency is retained, in the form of a separate unitary I, the consequent restriction of flow will inhibit the attainment of greatness. But if the inflow greatly exceeds the capacity, there is the danger that the entire system will explode. 79

In talking about the dangers of greatness, several months before his own system became unable to sustain the pressures on it, Nietzsche is clearly talking about himself. In his last productive year—working at fever pitch he authored six books in 1888, four of them major—Nietzsche overflowed, consumed himself, and did not spare himself in striving to accomplish his task. The river broke its banks as he wrote himself over the edge of the abyss; the final explosion was fatal and disastrous, as the great health collapsed in upon itself. But what concerns the student of Nietzsche is not the imitation magistri, the emulation of the actual man's existence, but the ways the life portrayed in his writings—"life passed through the fire of thought"—vivifies the existence of the reader by opening it up to broader and deeper possibilities of experience. Nietzsche's psychological ideas thus have a value for the rest of us that is independent of the tragic fate of his own person.

Next to the note in which Nietzsche claimed to have "the most comprehensive soul" of any European who had ever lived is another, one that ends with the most poignant of questions.

There is a false saying: "How can someone who can't save himself save others?" Supposing I have the key to your chains, why should your lock and my lock be the same? 80

Epilogue: A Dangerous Life

The intellect of man is forced to choose
Perfection of the life, or of the work,
And if it take the second must refuse
A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.
Yeats

Much has been left open by the preceding chapters, in good faith; but something needs to be said in response to the questions raised at the very end. If Nietzsche's reflections on psychology culminate in a picture of "the great health"—souls burgeoning on many levels with various parts in the psyche shaping, forming, commanding, exercising protracted discipline on other parts until ultimately control is relaxed so as to allow spontaneous activity from awareness of a full range of perspectives—how then are we to understand the proponent's prompt collapse into madness, especially given his emphasis on connections between the ideas and the life? Is Nietzsche's teaching on the soul inherently dangerous, are the reaches of his psychology fraught with peril, and is the emphasis on the experimental and experiential detrimental to his readers' mental health? Or can his ideas be celebrated as salutary in spite of the hazards that may attend some of them?

These questions are best approached through a complement to the political model of psychological health that found its ultimate depiction in Twilight of the Idols. We saw how the soul in Nietzsche also seems to call for expression through ideas about life as a play enacted in the theater of the psyche, and that his disillusion with Wagner's theatricality may have disinclined him from pursuing these ideas. Taking a lead from the way that subsequent depth psychology employs imagery of drama, one can extrapolate from his metaphors concerning masks, roles, and psychical actors in order to reconstruct a picture of psychological order that is consonant with the rest of Nietzsche's thinking. These considerations may put us in a better position to ponder, if only provisionally, the meanings of his madness.

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